

MEMOIRS
OF A
SCOTS HEIRESS.

ADDRESSED TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LADY CATHERINE * * * * *

BY THE AUTHOR OF CONSTANCE, &c.

VOLUME II.

L O N D O N :

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YOU left us, my dear madam, listening to the approaching noise, and myself looking out to see the cause of it. How shall I describe to you the rapture I felt, when I saw *the monster* Mrs. Dibart had figured to her imagination was no other than a large boat with several rowers in it. — God be praised ! I exclaimed, Mrs. Dibart, we are safe ; here are people coming to our assistance. — Sit still, and be calm ; for Heaven has heard our prayers ; and nothing but our

raftness can hurt us. The poor dear terrified creature was all obedience: she raised her eyes and hands: the tears poured down her pallid cheeks; she trembled excessively; but not once did she attempt to stir.

It was evident that we had been seen, and were the object towards which the boat was directed. The men rowed with all their might; and were soon near enough for us to see that they were Europeans. The ecstasy of that moment exceeded all I had ever experienced. What then was our consternation, when we felt our own shattered vessel labouring excessively with the waves thrown up by the approaching boat, and saw a mountain of water roll over us? It plunged us below the surface of the sea;—the canoe overfet; and horror and darkness surrounded us.

All consciousness of misery at this instant

stant abandoned us. As 'sad Electra's poet' says,

'To want our senses in the hour of ill
'Is comfort to the wretched.'

and such it was to us; for we remained ignorant of all subsequent suffering; and waked to existence in a situation that made me doubt the reality of it.

I found myself, as I thought, at rest, and laid on a feather bed upon the floor of a room. Mrs. Dibart was disposed of in the same manner at a little distance from me. On one side of me I saw standing, a young woman in an European habit; but not that of my own country: she stooped down when I opened my eyes, and gave me something to drink. On the other hand was a middle-aged man kneeling, and who had hold of my wrist, as if counting the strokes of my pulse. I perceived my

clothes had been changed, that I was now wrapt up in a large flannel gown, and had been bled.

All this was astonishing to me ; but I had not yet the power of enquiry. Around Mrs. Dibart I saw an elderly lady and two women, seemingly her servants : they were busy in chafing my companion's hand and feet ; and she appeared farther from recovery than myself. — While I looked, I saw her stir, and open her eyes ; and her calling out, *Oh, Mary, Mary, we are drowned*, restored my recollection and my speech. I could assure her we were safe, but to her next question, *Where are we?* I had nothing to reply.

The benevolent ladies on hearing our voices, began to administer the consolation of words ; but they were words as unintelligible to me in the disordered state of my faculties as those of Iricoo's
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companions; yet still they were consolation:—the sound of an European voice was to us inexpressibly harmonious music.

I could judge by the gloom that it was evening when we were removed from our couches, which were two hammocks cut down and laid on the floor, and we were placed in two arm-chairs. I now saw that we were still at sea, and in the cabin of a large vessel very finely fitted up. A moderate quantity of food, delicious to our palates beyond all idea, was set before us, and some liquor, I believe brandy and water.

After this repast I felt quite recovered, though too weak to rise. Mrs. Dibart, who was placed opposite to me, was nearly as forward in reanimation. My heart was filled with gratitude to the Almighty, and those he had made the in-

instruments of our preservation; nor was my fellow-sufferer at all less sensible to the mercy we had experienced. The ladies were with us, watching us with the tenderest assiduity, but seemed fearful of disturbing us by speaking: the surgeon, who was the person I had seen before, came to visit us, and by his direction we were carried, in perfect silence and with the gentlest care, to beds that our late miseries had rendered peculiarly delightful.

It was broad day-light, or rather, I might say, a meridian sun was blazing on us when I waked. My companion was in my sight, and soon after opened her eyes. She began now to look like herself, and I felt all the benign influence of balmy sleep. One of the female attendants was waiting: the surgeon made us another visit, after which we found we were to rise. Clothes resembling those the young lady wore were brought

brought us: we had the luxury of fresh linen; and sure no gratification of pride was ever so soothing to the human heart as this requisite change of dress was to us.

We were conducted to the room we had been in the day before. A breakfast was spread for us, and so altered was our situation, that the greatest misfortune I now felt, was the pantomime we were forced to in lieu of speech; nor on our side was this very distressing, for our wants were all anticipated; but I longed to return some small tribute of thanks to our deliverers: my eyes and uplifted hands had hitherto been my only interpreters; but even this dumb language our generous patronesses seemed to understand, and to accept.

Having now recovered a considerable portion of strength and my perfect recollection, I ventured to try whether I

could make my language comprehended. I spoke English very deliberately ; but the ladies shook their heads. I tried French : they were still silent, but looked more earnestly at me. After a few words, the younger of the ladies rose and left us. She presently returned, followed by a gentleman of a foreign aspect, and apparently about sixty years of age. His address, and the whole of his external, made me suppose him a Spaniard.

I had, as I have already told you, learnt a good deal of Spanish in my first voyage, and by the kind endeavours of Mr. Holmes had afterwards acquired a competent knowledge of it. I therefore addressed this gentleman in that language ; and requested he would inform me where we were, and to whom so highly indebted. . He replied, softening the severity of his look by a benignant smile, *Je ne suis pas Espagnol, madame, mais je vous entends bien ; je suis Portugais :*

gais : vous etes sur la mer Atlantique, dans une vaisseau de mon maitre le roi de Portugal, dont j'ai l'honneur d'etre capitaine. Nous sommes venus du Bresil, et nous nous allons a Tercera, une des isles Azores : nous vous sommes tous amis ; nous sommes touchés de douleur a cause de vos malheurs. Ces dames ci sont la veuve et la fille du feu monsieur le gouverneur du Bresil, et elles ne se croient que trop heureuses d'avoir le bonheur de vous rendre services. 'I am not a Spaniard, madam, but I understand you ; I am a Portuguese : you are on the Atlantic, in a vessel belonging to my master the king of Portugal, of which I have the honour to be captain. We are come from Brasil, and we are going to Terceira, one of the Azorian isles. We are all your friends : we are touched with grief at your misfortunes. These ladies here are the widow and daughter of the late governor of the Brasils, and they esteem themselves but too happy in

having the good fortune to be of service to you.

To expressions at once so friendly and polite, I was happy to reply by a short account of our situation. The captain re-assured us of his protection; promising to convey us in safety to the Azores, where, the ladies added, we should remain with them till a vessel sailed for Portugal, from whence we could, without difficulty, procure a passage for England.

All our woes seemed now on a sudden terminated; and Mrs. Dibart and I repeated our acknowledgments to the captain: he, with every expression of profound respect for our patronesses, and of regard for us, left us; and my felicities were immediately much increased, by discovering that now that my intellects and organs were clear, the ladies could, with very little difficulty, understand the Spanish

Spanish I spoke: their Portuguese was equally intelligible; and the desire of communication stimulating us, we were soon able to converse together. Poor Mrs. Dibart was not quite so happy: she spoke French; but this was here useless: it however enabled her to talk to the captain, and she was forced to be content. On this occasion I could not help remarking the retrograde progress of her regret: she was not vexed at her voluntary ignorance of Spanish; but she was angry that neither of the ladies understood French.

We learnt that we had been taken up about ten leagues south east of the great Newfoundland fishing-bank; that the sand on which we had been *accidentally* left, as, for Mrs. Dibart's sake, we were forced to represent it, was often covered by the sea; and that but for our desperate exertion we must have inevitably and shortly perished in the waves on it. Our

tance from the Azores was computed at about two hundred and seventy leagues which, with the wind then blowing, it was hoped we might reach in six days.

'Tis time I bring you a little acquainted with persons to whom we were so highly obliged. Donna Isabella de Vidos, the elder of the ladies, was not more than forty years of age : her figure was majestic, and her deportment commanded respect. She did not appear to have been ever handsome : her complexion was dark ; her visage long ; but her eyes too penetrating to bear examination. National *hauteur*, perhaps increased by the distinguished rank she had held in America, was predominant in her manner, but it was tempered by such thorough good nature as soon removed every dread it occasioned. She was treated with every possible distinction on board : no one ever entered the great cabin but ourselves, the captain, the surgeon who

who had the care of our health, and Donna Isabella's two female attendants. The vessel carried only these ladies and their suite, which was very numerous, beside its own crew. Neither of them ever went on deck; but, allowing for a difference in customs arising from national manners, they took no offence at our enjoying what contributed much to our restoration.

Donna Emilia was not quite nineteen years of age, tall, slender, and exquisitely proportioned: her complexion and hair were *brunette*; but they were so enlivened by bright eyes and the most beautiful teeth I ever saw, that the fairest hue would not have been preferable. She had less *hauteur* than her mother, though she did not want for a sense of her own importance: dignity and grace were blended in her; and in her whole composition there seemed so due a mixture of opposite excellencies as rendered

dered her a most charming creature. It was easy to discover the line drawn in her mind, between the provinces of nature and education : the former had furnished her with an open susceptible heart, the access to which the latter occasionally barred. Before her mother, to whom she seemed to pay the utmost reverence, her manner was chastised : when she was absent, restraint was laid aside ; she was free in her expressions of regard, and exquisitely amiable.

On the third day after our preservation, while Mrs. Dibart and I were inhaling the salubrious breezes on the quarter deck, the captain, who always joined and conversed with us there, introduced to our acquaintance a young sailor, saying, when he presented him, *Mesdames, je presente ce jeune homme a vos regards : c'est a lui que vous devez la vie : il vous ait vu le premier : il s'est plongé dans l'eau—il vous ait sauvé—c'est un bon*
garçon.

garçon.—‘ Ladies, I present this young man to your regard : it is to him you owe your life : he saw you first : he plunged into the water : he saved you : he is a good lad.’

We returned the only acknowledgements in our power, those of thanks, which the young man seemed rather desirous to avoid. He spoke good French, said he was very glad to have been the means of our preservation, but disclaimed all merit in what he had done. *Il faut etre bête, said he, laisser perir, faute d'un petit effort, un creature de la même espece : j'aurois été bien heureux sauver la vie a qui que ce soit ; mais il me fait grand plaisir rendre service à des dames Angloises, parceque c'est qu'en Angleterre que j'ai reçu infinité de politesses.* ‘ One must be a brute to suffer a fellow-creature to perish for want of a little effort. I should have been very happy to save the life of any body, but it is great pleasure

pleasure to me to render service to English ladies, because I have received many kindneſſes in England.'

There was ſomething in this man's ſtyle of ſpeaking that ill accorded with his ſtation and appearance: he was by far the dirtieſt ſailor I had ſeen on board: his gait was the vulgareſt poſſible: his civilities were thoſe of our boors; and the Cymon ſeemed univerſally predominant in him. I was aſtoniſhed at his language, and moſt agreeably ſo when he named England as a country where he had received what he had termed *politeſſes*. What ſort of *politeſſe*, thought I, could be ſhewn to ſuch a rude being as thou art?

Mrs. Dibart's curioſity was not inferior to mine: and ſhe joined me in requeſting the captain to let us aſk our new acquaintance a few queſtions. To theſe he answered now in very tolerable English

lish that he was a Portuguese by birth, that his friends were very poor, but had had interest enough to get him a post in the retinue of an ambassador from the court of Lisbon to that of London. He said he was sixteen when he went, had been in England a year, had seen all its wonders, and returned to his father's cottage as poor as he set out : a violent inclination had afterwards seized him to go to the Brasils : he had indulged it, found nothing was to be got there, and now, after three years stay, was working his passage home to poverty and misery. — At these words he gave himself such a thump on the breast as was enough to beat his breath out : he was agitated, as I concluded, by the recollection of his poverty, and turned away to wipe his eyes.

A thought at this instant struck me, that we might, in some measure, requite the kindness of this poor fellow, whose
nam^c

name we were told was Pedro Romez. We asked no more questions, and he retired with the captain, immediately after which I mentioned to Mrs. Dibart the possibility of gratifying this poor young man for the risque he had run in saving us, if he was willing to accompany us to England. A man servant when we travelled we certainly should want, and Pedro was as likely to be diligent and faithful as any stranger. She at first objected, alledging she was always afraid of foreigners, particularly if they were Roman Catholics. I was nettled at the silly, illiberal prejudice, and at the inconsistency it betrayed — Pray, said I, my dear madam, was not Monsieur La Colle a foreigner? Not even an European: and he was a Catholic too.

The difficulty now vanished; for the principle on which it was founded was untenable. Mrs. Dibart acquiesced; on re-consideration was delighted with the
pro-

proposition, and saw innumerable advantages in it. We begged to see Pedro Romez again : he came. Mrs. Dibart made the proposal : she offered him an hundred guineas to be paid in London ; to retain him in her service, or to pay his passage home. He bowed in his gawky way, and thanked her ; but did not seem smitten with the temptation. If Heaven spares my life, said he, I will guard you home ; but I cannot do it for money.—He then abruptly left us, not a little surprised at his oddity.

This incident, insignificant in itself, was a fillip to our spirits ; and to hear of England increased our longing to be there. We returned to the great cabin where were the ladies ; and I related to them our adventure. They acknowledged Pedro's conduct singular : the young one expressed some interest for his misfortunes ; but both of them seemed to think we had degraded ourselves

selves by the confabulation : I therefore dropped the subject.

Our voyage was now, to our great comfort, drawing near a conclusion. Two days it was expected would bring us within sight of the Azores. Donna Isabella expressed a very reasonable joy on the occasion ; but, for what reason I could not divine, Donna Emilia grew evidently dejected as we proceeded. I had remarked that she was at the time, extremely pensive ; and I thought she seemed to force her spirits into cheerfulness when her mother was present. I was sorry to believe her unhappy ; but to offer any consolation was impossible ; for such was the awe even her look inspired, that I dared not even hint. I thought her melancholy : that she was so, was every hour more perceptible.

The only place where these ladies could resort for fresh air was the gallery

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to which the great cabin opened. Here, on the day before that which was, according to computation, to terminate our voyage, I found Donna Emilia early in the morning standing, and weeping bitterly: her mother was not yet risen; and the young lady appeared to me indulging in the liberty this absence allowed her.

As soon as I saw how she was occupied, I would have retired: she had seen me: she made a sign to me not to go; she drew me towards her, and covering her face with her handkerchief, cried vehemently. I was grieved to the soul at seeing her distress: I could only say, dear Donna Emilia, how I pity you! — I dare not ask the cause of your sorrow: tell me only can I relieve it.—She shook her head, sobbed more violently than before, and was for some minutes so convulsed by the workings of her bosom, that I feared she would go into fits.

I asked

I asked if I should call one of her servants: she could not answer; but held me still faster. At length the passion of her grief subsided; she grew calm, and the tears only trickled gently down her cheek. She now could speak; and seemed no less anxious to disclose the secret that oppressed her than I was to hear it.

She began in words to this effect: —
‘ You, Donna Maria, see our approach to land with joy; and glad you undoubtedly ought to be; but the land we are going to will be to me far more terrible than the grave. Oh! let me have the only comfort I can enjoy, that of revealing my affliction; and justify the imprudence of my trusting a stranger by promising never to reveal to any one here or where we are going what I shall tell you. I have loved you, Donna Maria, from the moment of your preservation: something within me says you
have

have been unhappy and can pity the unhappy.'

My tears now flowed as fast as this charming girl's; and I could scarcely articulate a promise of secrecy. She was hurt at seeing how she had interested me; she strove to remove the effect of what she had said, and then, with an assumed composure, gave me this narrative.

'From my earliest infancy I can remember the intimate friendship that subsisted between my father and Don Antonio Riva. Don Antonio had only one son; and our parents mutually wishing an union of families, took every proper means to attach us to each other. Our dispositions agreed with their wishes: Carlos, though five years older than myself, preferred me to all his companions, and I, who seemed born only to love him, felt all that affection for him, that esteem and gratitude could inspire in an
older

older bosom. I looked up to him in all childish grievances as my friend and protector: he considered me as his charge; and thus, without our being entrusted with the intention of our families, we promoted it. A thought of a more intimate union than that we enjoyed had never entered my imagination, when my father was appointed to the government of Brasil; and we were ordered to prepare for leaving Portugal.

‘ This was not the first affliction of the kind I had ever suffered; for Carlos’s education had before obliged him to travel; but I felt the idea of quitting him far more grievous than his quitting me: years seemed now to have riveted me to him, and to be separated was an evil I could not face with any degree of fortitude. He, the instant he heard the news, came to me: he confirmed my fears that we must part; he said, it was inevitable unless I would allow him to

to ask my father's consent to our immediate union, and consent to remain with him in Portugal. He had obtained Don Antonio's concurrence : I did not hesitate to give him the permission he asked ; and my father received his proposal with joy ; but on my account wished our marriage postponed till he returned to Europe, which would be in three years. He prevailed on Don Carlos to have patience, by pledging his word to him, and by allowing him to attend us to Brasil.

I was now completely happy. Carlos tore himself from his family, and we sailed together. My father, on assuming the government, gave him a very honourable post under him : we lived as we had done in Lisbon ; and I felt no impatience for our return.

In about eighteen months after our quitting Portugal, Don Antonio Riva

died. Under this loss I had the exquisite pleasure of consoling my dearest Carlos; and I saw him recovering his cheerfulness, when an accident happened that I did not then perceive was to be the destruction of my happiness. Don Antonio had left considerable property, but so confusedly bequeathed and so embroiled by litigation, that a partition of it was not easily adjusted. His relations, taking advantage of Carlos's absence, seized on the greater and most valuable part. He was forced to return to Portugal to vindicate his rights; but the mischief was already irreparable: the law decided in due form against him, though the intention of his father was universally supposed and acknowledged to have been in his favour.

‘ He returned to us under the greatest dejection of spirits: he procured an interview with me before he saw my father: he told me every circumstance of
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the misfortune that had befallen him, which he seemed to regret only as it might influence the governor against him. I assured him it could have no such dismal consequences: I told him he did not know my father, or he would not injure him by such a suspicion. I was rash enough to advise his going instantly to him, and unbosoming himself without reserve.—Alas! how was I deceived! how cruelly was I punished for my presumption! My father insisted on being absolved from a promise that must now be disadvantageous to me. My generous Carlos, urged by that consideration and the greatness of his noble mind, instantly relinquished his claim. His tenderness for me would not suffer him to wound me by a personal farewell: he wrote to me, and briefly said, he should depart for Europe with the first ship.

“It was my father’s positive command that I should not reply to this adieu.

Cruel as he was, I revered him too much to disobey him. My obedience nearly cost me my life. I heard no more of Carlos : sufficient care was taken to keep me in ignorance ; and in a few weeks, when I had tolerably recovered my health, my father informed me of what he certainly thought would gratify me. Overtures had been made to him by the king himself for a marriage between me and his favourite the Count di Viana, a young man of infinite merit, and who was gone to take on him the highest military command in the Azores.

‘ To this proposal, splendid as it was, I was deaf. To have in one instance preferred obedience to love was, I thought, sufficient ; and though I knew the Count and entertained the highest respect for him, I abhorred the idea of marrying him or any one. His passion was no secret to me ; he had discovered it before I left

left Lisbon. I then refused him because I was indifferent; I now hated him because I was prepossessed.

‘ My firmness, or obstinacy, as it was termed, withstood the threats, the persuasions, and the intreaties made use of by my father, and in obedience to him, seconded by my mother. I did not attempt to disguise my undiminished love for Don Carlos; but they were as obdurate as myself. At this time my father fell sick: his disorder was alarming, and soon proved incurable. On his death-bed he sent for my mother and me: he told me how much my refusal of the Count di Viana grieved him, and he conjured me, if I hoped for his dying benediction, or wished him to expire in peace, to yield to his wishes. Whose fortitude is equal to such a trial? I was distracted with grief and terror: I promised submission: he made me swear on the holy crucifix I would accept the

Count for my husband whenever he should offer me his hand: he made my mother witness the oath; and bound her in the same sacred manner to see it performed. He lived only long enough to obtain this satisfaction, and I had the comfort of seeing him, at what I then thought the cheap price of my peace, depart to Heaven without a sigh.

Sorrow for many weeks banished every image but his from my heart. As soon as it began to subside, my mother prepared to quit Brasil and to discharge the vow she had made. I suffered her without opposition to act as she thought proper. She wrote to the Count, but could not prevail on me to write. He returned such an answer as left me neither hope nor resource, lamented that the duties of his office confined him to his destination, and intreated my mother, instead of going immediately home, to bring me to him. To this, as precipi-
tating

tating my doom, I strongly objected; but without effect. We embarked on board this vessel, and a few hours will determine my fate. Think then, dear Donna Maria, if I have not cause to weep, and to say I would rather see my grave than the Azorian shores.'

The lovely Portuguese closed her narrative in tears; and hard must have been the heart that had heard it without sympathizing in her too just grief. It was a case that admitted neither of hope nor comfort: submission was all I could preach; and on that head the amiable creature had anticipated every argument.

Renewing her injunction to secrecy, she still farther intrusted me. I had observed her always to wear something pendant from her neck. What it was I knew not; but supposed, as nothing but the ribbon it was hung by was in sight,

that it was rather some religious memorial than an ornament of dress. When she had dried her eyes, she drew it from her bosom: it was an oval set round with pearls of a very superior size: on one side was a head of the Virgin beautifully enamelled, and on the other a crucifix. Donna Emilia kissed it with reverence, and then opening it, as if it had been a watch, she shewed me its inside, which contained a miniature picture. I needed not to ask of whom: her countenance affixed a name to it: she put it up again, hastily wiped her eyes, and left me sincerely interested in her sorrow, though scarcely able to forbear smiling at the cunning of her amiable superstition. I soon after left her, assuring her of my attachment, fearful lest Donna Isabella might be offended if she chanced to find us in so confidential a situation.

On my return to Mrs. Dibart, I found
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it difficult to disguise my feelings. To prevent her inquisitiveness, I accompanied her to the deck, where I endeavoured to lose my recollection in gossiping with Pedro Romez. We talked of England and its charms, of which he seemed highly enamoured: he renewed again the subject of accompanying us thither; but still would not hear of a recompence; and such was the oddity of his discourse, that before we parted I began to think him crazy.

Poor Donna Emilia's sufferings increased with the day; and when land was cried the following morning, they were so great that her mother made an excuse for her not appearing on the joyful occasion. My heart was with her; but I dared not offer to go to her. Donna Isabella I could discover was not insensible to her daughter's calamitous situation: and, now that I was aware of its circumstances, I could clearly discern

the conflict occasioned in her mind by regard to her vow, and pity for her whom it punished.

We were soon in soundings off the island of Terceira: our coming was announced: boats crowded from the shore, and we were summoned on deck. Many gentlemen were already there to escort the Portuguese ladies; and among them I could immediately distinguish the happy Count. Donna Isabella went first, led by the captain: her wretched daughter pale and in tears, hung on her; Mrs. Dibart and I followed.

The Count's eyes were instantly fixed on Donna Emilia: he took her mother's hand, bowed, and kissed it: then passing her, he came up to his intended bride. She involuntarily shrunk back. He asked her in the gentlest terms why she received him with so repelling an aspect. Donna Isabella attempted by flight

slight excuses of fatigue and indisposition to screen her; but the daughter would be heard. 'I come, my lord, said she, in obedience to my father's dying injunction, which I am resolved to obey; and when I have obeyed it, may the earth open and swallow me!'

Every one but Donna Isabella and myself seemed astonished. The Count retreated a few paces back with signs of horror. Donna Emilia threw herself on my bosom, and was absorbed in grief. At this instant, one from among the croud of sailors jumped forward, and stood between Donna Emilia and the Count. It was a young man very well dressed in the Portuguese habit, and who had all the appearance of a gentleman. I supposed him to be one of Donna Isabella's suite, of whom there were many I never had seen. As he glanced by us, Mrs. Dibart whispered, 'tis Pedro Romeo in another dress. I started and

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looked

looked at him : his voice convinced me she was not mistaken, but a slight observation of his features puzzled me extremely, for his features were those of the miniature Donna Emilia had shewn me the preceding day. She, poor wretched creature ! was too much engrossed by her affliction to heed what passed : she clung to me, but was presently roused by the increasing tumult.

The young man, whoever he was, and whom the captain had endeavoured to remove from a situation not very respectful to the Count, maintained his post ; and insisting on being heard, addressed the embarrassed disappointed lover. My lord, said he, I come not to oppose your right, or to renew a claim I have renounced. I come only to warn you on my knowledge of Donna Emilia de Vidos, that your marrying her in her present temper of mind will be an act of cruelty you will one day shudder at. I

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am Don Carlos Riva: I have, without her privity, accompanied her in disguise, that I might see the laws of justice, superior to those of implicit obedience, duly fulfilled. She was mine by mutual attachment; she was mine by her father's promise, while I was thought rich: she is not mine now, for I am poor; and that I might not make her poor I renounced her. You are a husband chosen for her by her father: she has agreed to accept you; and if she does so willingly, willingly do I resign her; but if the smallest constraint is put on her affections; if you attempt to seize her hand while she withholds her heart, this, continued he, clapping his hand to his sword, shall preserve her freedom from your tyranny.

An appeal to Donna Emisia was the only means of deciding this important and interesting question; but this was unnecessary. Instantly as Don Carlos paused,

paused, and as her astonishment gave way to conviction, she broke from me, and sheltering herself in his arms, shewed at once her preference and the force of her affection. Recollecting herself, and the promise she was bound by, she quitted her situation, and holding one of his hands, stood before the Count as if awaiting his sentence.

He came towards her.—Carlos's hand was again on his sword hilt.—The Count smiled at his jealous impetuosity, and making a sign to him to be patient, he took her other hand and addressed himself to Donna Isabella. I perceive, madam, says he, that means I never suspected have been made use of to procure me the alliance of your family : I have long entertained a passion for this lady, of which she was not ignorant. I was, I own, delighted with the idea of possessing her ; but far be it from me to purchase even this blessing, though I have
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counted the moments till it arrived, at the price I see it would cost her. Believe me, I have been misinformed, or I would never have occasioned her the least disturbance, for ardently as I loved her in Portugal, improved as I see her, and impatiently as I have longed for the hour that should make her mine, I love justice better; and can feel no regret when it is exercised even on my own person. She has bestowed her affection on Don Carlos de Riva, a gentleman to whose merits and injuries all our country bear witness, and whom, I am happy to say, the king, our master, waits only to hear, to recompence for all his losses. Let me then exercise whatever power her father has given me over her in disposing of her according to her choice. Take her, said he, turning to the astonished and enraptured Carlos: take her, and may Heaven bless you with her; but remember it is not to shun your sword, but a sharper weapon, that I relinquish her:

her: it is to shun the stabs of conscience that I yield.

Oh what I felt for the Count when he uttered these last words. I saw the struggle of his soul in his countenance: Manly as he had evinced himself, I saw his eyes fill: he retreated with a staggering pace; and left the ship instantly:

The joy of Carlos and Emilia was lessened by shame at seeing themselves so far outdone in generosity. Pity for the Count di Viana was now uppermost in every breast; yet who but must rejoice at seeing two persons destined from their infancy, and by choice, for each other, again brought together? Joy quickly regained her post, and as soon as Donna Emilia was tolerably recovered and composed, preparations were made for our landing. But here a new difficulty occurred.

Donna

Donna Isabella had shewn no resentment of her daughter's conduct or that of Don Carlos. On the contrary, I could perceive her maternal affection decidedly superior to every other consideration. She said she had fulfilled her promise to her deceased husband as far as was in her power; that the rejection now came from the Count himself; that she had only bound herself to see her daughter married whenever he should demand her, and that therefore she held herself exonerated from all farther obligation. To this declaration, comfortable in the highest degree to the young folks, she added a very handsome testimony in favour of Don Carlos, by saying she was certain, that were the spirit of her husband conscious of what then passed, it must approve Don Carlos's good fortune, since she was well convinced nothing but his inability to support Donna Emilia suitably to her rank, could have prevailed on him to do a
harsh

harsh thing by a man he loved with the affection of a father.

But this sudden turn of affairs had so deranged all system, that something new must be projected before the ladies could go on shore. The Count's house, as commanding officer, was to have been the place of their abode ; but it was now not a fit retreat. The inhabitants of the island were all strangers to them : they knew not what accommodations it could afford them and their numerous retinue ; nor indeed could they guess how persons perhaps attached to the Count, disappointed of the *gala* they had prepared, and not improbably resenting the preference of Don Carlos, would receive them.

After a short consultation, it was agreed that Donna Isabella's majordomo should go on shore, and find a house for their reception as strangers : he was sent off
on

on this embassy, and while waiting his return, Don Carlos solved the mystery of Pedro Romez.

He said, that from the time of his bidding adieu to Donna Emilia till his embarking with her, he had remained concealed in a situation which afforded him intelligence of all that passed at the governor's; that understanding a vessel was preparing to carry Donna Isabella, and her to the Azores, he had engaged himself as a common sailor, resolved to act as he had done.

Mrs. Dibart and myself were hurt at the familiarity with which we had treated him, and at the offer we had made of hiring him to attend us home. He would not suffer us to apologize: he was highly diverted at the cheat he had put on us; and we admired no less the spirit with which he had sustained his assumed character; nor did we omit our commendations

mendations of his supreme dirtiness, and his loutish deportment.

Before the majordomo returned, a military officer came on board : he enquired for Don Carlos Riva, and delivered to him a billet to the following purport :

‘ My dear friend,

‘ A weakness I abhor myself for,—an emotion I could not then overcome, has made me guilty of an unpardonable omission. I ought, before I left you, to have requested you to make use of my house and every thing belonging to me. It is ready for your reception ; and I beg the ladies, yourself, and all their suite, will immediately land and take possession of it.—Do not, my dear friend, suffer your feelings to be wounded, if you observe in it preparations that now suit your situation better than mine. The disappointment was necessary, and it is fit I submit to it. The servants have my
direc-

directions to obey all your commands. My mind, I confess, is not yet sufficiently fortified to allow of my meeting you there. I shall endeavour to render myself worthy of your regard; and shall ever acknowledge myself, &c.

‘The Count di Viana.’

Here was the victory of politeness over chagrin; but how to reply to the offer was not immediately determinable. Neither Donna Isabella's nor her daughter's delicacy would permit them to accept it, and Don Carlos could not endure to insult his conquered rival, by usurping the preparations he had made for his own disappointed nuptials. He therefore replied by a billet, expressing his concern and his gratitude; but positively, though politely, declining the obligation pressed on him. He begged the Count to give orders for the private reception of the ladies, their friends, and attendants elsewhere, or to suffer them to remain

remain on board the vessel till another could be got ready to convey them to Portugal.

The answer to this request arrived with the majordomo. The bishop who had resided on the island was lately dead: his palace was unoccupied, and thither, to our great comfort, we were removed.

Our kind benefactresses now renewed their active interest for us, and postponed every other business to that of procuring us conveniences. We had, ever since our acquaintance with them, subsisted by their bounty, had been clothed from their wardrobe, and must still depend on their liberality, for we were destitute of every thing, and could not ask for credit. Their generosity and attention soon removed all our removable distresses: they would not hear of thanks or return, and though Mrs. Dibart offered them

bills of exchange on London, which as soon as her affairs were settled could easily have been paid, they rejected all, and said they would have the undiminished pleasure of rendering us gratuitously every service in their power.

Of this happy and amiable family, Mrs. Dibart and I seemed to form natural branches. We were Donna Isabella's daughters, and Donna Emilia's sisters as far as reverence and affection could render us so. Don Carlos considered us as his peculiar care; and they all insisted on our proceeding with them to Lisbon, for which place they were hastening their departure, not chusing to wound the Count by celebrating their marriage where they were.

On the fourth day after our arrival, a message came from the Count, intimating his intention of ~~making the ladies a~~ visit. The civility could not be rejected,
glad

glad as all parties would have been to have avoided so irksome a meeting. He came without attendants; and while he paid his compliments, I had an opportunity of surveying him at leisure: he was then under twenty eight years of age, and in his person more exactly met my idea of manly beauty, than any body I had before or have since seen. His manners seemed the product of politeness grafted on good sense; and he had the captivating art of rendering indifferent actions pleasing and the most common change of posture or exercise of his limbs graceful: the gentleman, the nobleman, the courtier were perceptible in all his behaviour; but these ornaments received additional lustre from, and were entirely founded in, the inestimable qualities of his head and heart.

It was with concern equal to my esteem for him, that I observed the havock dejection of spirits had made in his
fine

fine countenance. He had so far mastered himself as to see Donna Emilia without betraying his feelings. The propriety of her conduct was such as must console him and assist him in this victory over disappointed passion: she acknowledged herself indebted to him for more than life: she intreated the continuance of his regard, if it could be continued without giving him pain. She even offered, if he could prevail on Don Carlos, to remain all her life unmarried: she would go into a convent; she would do any thing to shew her sense of his generosity.

He, who I am certain wished only her happiness, seemed now as much bent on her accomplishing the wishes of her favoured lover, as he had been earnest for that of his own. He would not suffer such a compliment as the postponing their marriage to be paid to his scarcely subdued affection, till he was

convinced it was what the parties themselves preferred. His kindness was extended even to us: he compassionated our misfortunes, offered us every service in his power, and made us the most elegant presents.

In a few days, after partaking of magnificent entertainments prepared for our illustrious friends, not only by the Count, but by every person of any distinction in the island, orders were given for the same vessel to be fitted out, and the same crew to be in readiness to convey us to Lisbon. Alike as all the world was to me, and little as I had to tempt me any where, I rejoiced in the prospect of returning to Europe. — Not so my fickle friend, Mrs. Dibart: she seemed perfectly contented in her present situation, and not at all ambitious of one more independant. To rouse her from a lethargy which I feared must make her appear ungrateful, I mentioned the exped-

pediency of her return to England, that she might administer to her husband's will and take possession of his property. This had little effect; she knew the whole of it was securely hers: every consideration was impertinent, every duty seemed trifling: she lived at ease: she hated trouble; and here she enjoyed the former completely, totally exempt from the latter.

As the time of our departure approached, her unwillingness to move increased. She drew into a closer intimacy, a lady from whose character and acquaintance I feared she would derive neither reputation nor advantage; but with whom, as being one of the few who spoke French, her connection was convenient and agreeable. This was Donna Antonia Lebida, the widow of an officer in the garrison, and who was not thought more respectable for preferring a residence here to a return into Portugal.

She was one of those many people who please without exciting esteem ; she was about five and thirty, uncommonly handsome, and thoroughly aware of the advantage : Nature had endued her with a large portion of ready wit, which nothing like timidity ever checked : she flattered all, she lashed all, was courted by all, either out of fear or favour, beloved by few and respected by none. The straitness of her finances was the only opposition her pride met with : it sometimes curbed her spirit, and by forcing a naturally haughty temper occasionally to sneak, made her in my eyes a perfectly contemptible being.

Her attachment to Mrs. Dibart was founded on very rational principles, and such as I foolishly imagined were entirely obvious. As she had no reason to doubt her veracity, she was convinced Mrs. Dibart was a woman of large fortune, and might therefore turn out a
pro-

profitable acquaintance; for Donna Antonia Lebida, who loved shew and played high, was never indignant at the receipt of a present in any shape; and she took it on trust that Mrs. Dibart would at some future time take an opportunity to repay her obligations to the Portuguese nation. Donna Antonia was consequently extremely officious to her; but thanks to my undisguised poverty, comfortably negligent towards me.

Some of those who formed the circle of our acquaintance here went so far as to hint to this good lady the delightful opportunity our voyage afforded her of revisiting her friends and native country; and had it not been for the kind care of Mrs. Dibart, she would have wanted an excuse for declining what was so highly eligible; but my travelling companion soon eased her from the dread of so irksome a necessity, by affecting all on a sudden a wonderful *hydro-*
D 3 *phobia,*

phobia, an insurmountable horror of the sea. — Her constitution was so relaxed and so shattered by her late sufferings, she feared she had not strength to undergo the fatigues of another voyage. We reminded her that she had but a few evenings before, notwithstanding *the weight of her widow's dress*, danced the Count di Viana absolutely down in an English country dance, and we assured her the sea-air would brace her. The first fact she excused; the last she denied; and I began to cast about how to get her away.

Do not, my dear lady Catherine, think me so little of the woman as to suppose curiosity was all this while dormant in my breast. In Mrs. Dibart's natural disposition, however inert, I could not find an adequate cause for this extreme apathy, which went so far as to lose its negative character, and really to become active, and acquire the name of positive obsti-

obstinacy. Unsatisfied with the pedigree I had formed for this failing, I watched her narrowly, and was very soon convinced that it proceeded from a source I had not once looked to: I saw clearly that her heart, too susceptible of some impressions and cruelly callous to others, had betrayed her into a passion for the Count di Viana. Great as was his merit, striking as were his external recommendations, and kind as he had been to us, I could not rigidly blame this attachment, though I wished the remembrance of her husband had been strong enough to have kept her out of it. I pitied her seriously, because I believed the weakness involuntary; and however insensible I myself was by constitution to attacks of this sort, I felt no inclination to be severe on her.

But charitable as I profess myself, I was so tenacious of Mrs. Dibart's reputation for prudence, that my lenity was

of little use to her; and regard for the captain's memory aiding this principle, I was doubly anxious for her removal. I did, for this purpose, what shocked me in the act; I talked to her of the circumstances of his death: I conjured her to exert herself in settling his affairs, and not to suffer her courage, which had hitherto so supported her, to droop at the prospect of a very fine voyage which the season and the weather promised us. I might as well have talked to the sea that washed the shore we were standing on: she was sorry it was her ill fortune not to please me:—she left me at liberty to act as I chose in every thing; and she hoped it was no unpardonable presumption to say she expected the same allowance for herself:—neither her frame of body nor her spirits were at all calculated for fatigue; and could she with any comfort settle herself where she was, she would certainly wait the recovery of her strength, and strive to forget, in some measure, the
ter-

terrors she had suffered, before she again trusted herself to an element she had such just cause to dread.

This was farther than she had yet gone in declaring her aversion to return to Europe. I saw I must betray my trust as a friend, or proceed to very unpleasant extremities.

Preferring the loss of her favour to the condemning sentence of my own heart, I frankly told her what I suspected detained her. At the same time I acknowledged the Count's uncommon merits, I commended her quick perception of them, and applauded her gratitude in the most respectful terms I could devise; but I besought her to reflect seriously how any inclination of the species I hinted at, however natural and however laudable in itself, must, if indulged, terminate. If the Count was insensible to her regard, surely it was most prudent,

D 5

though

though perhaps most painful, to quit him and the place he was in: if her affection was returned, the obstacles to their union rendered it almost a hopeless case: she must do what I hoped Mrs. Dibart never would do; she must abandon her country, her friends, her relations, and probably her religion. At least, my dearest madam, said I, let a proper time elapse before you resolve on a matter that so intimately concerns your peace and reputation. Let us, if it is for ever so short a time, by all means return to England.

A conscious blush had overspread her countenance and animated her pretty features on my naming the Count di Viana: it was succeeded by an ill-timed affectation of ignorance and surprise; and when I stopt, expecting her reply, she, to my utter confusion, assumed an appearance of indignation and resentment so highly natural, that I began heartily to repent

repent of my indiscreet admonition. She said, I had accused her most injuriously: she was a slave to my suspicions: — she was not mistress of her own actions, and scarcely of her looks. I had, however, relieved her very much on one point: I had made her resolve to trust any body rather than such an insidious friend; and that no earthly consideration should prevail on her to enter the same ship with me. I might go when and where I pleased: she would wait my departure.

I was too thoroughly confounded to make her any reply. — She repeated her resolution, and contemptuously left me. I knew not what course to take now. Much as I wished to find rest in my native country, I could not determine to leave her: I had no doubt that my staying with her would be accepted, and this, though extremely irksome, I on deliberation preferred. I watched for an opportunity of speaking to her in pri-

vate, resolved at any rate to procure a reconciliation. She shunned me too carefully, and all day attached herself as closely as possible to Donna Antonia Lebida, of whom I saw she wished to make me jealous. We went to bed without my having found what I sought. To sleep when at enmity with any one was not in my nature. I pictured to myself her dying suddenly before I had time to sue for peace: I fancied she might feel within herself some symptoms of ruined health, not discernible to others, and which influenced her to form the resolution of staying. I was weak enough to pass the night in tears and self-reproaches. The next morning I received the following billet from her :

‘ Dear madam,

‘ Your conduct and suspicions have convinced me it is best we should part for ever. You will leave me here happier than, in my forlorn state, I could be
any

any where else. Donna Antonia Lebida insists on my remaining with her till my health is re-established. I therefore beg you will, without hesitation, embark in the ship preparing for Donna Isabella, and think no more of

‘ Your affectionate,

‘ though ill-treated,

‘ CHARLOTTE DIBART.’

On the receipt of this cruel note, which once more cast me on the wide world, I sent to Mrs. Dibart a very urgent request to speak with her. Donna Antonia, I was told, was with her, and she would not see me. I then went to Donna Isabella, and in an agony of grief began to tell her what had passed between us. I had proceeded no farther than saying I thought I had discovered a cause for Mrs. Dibart’s reluctance, when Donna Isabella stopt and said: Donna Maria, I know the cause too well; we all see it, and indeed those
must

must be blind who do not see it : your friend is in love with the Count : her passion is fomented by the artifices of Donna Antonia Lebida, who knows full well how advantageous to her the bringing about such a match would be : I should have thought your friend's conduct excusable on the plea of English custom, if yours had at all resembled it ; but I assure you it is very shocking to Portuguese ideas.

I now without scruple disclosed all I knew : I convinced the stately Lusitanian that Mrs. Dibart's reputation amongst her friends in England would suffer irreparably by such and so precipitate an union ; and I earnestly begged her advice. She was not an advocate for submission on my part, but thought it most prudent for me to seem to take Mrs. Dibart at her word, and to act as if I would indeed leave her. We both were of opinion, that at the last moment her courage

rage would fail, and that to so helpless a woman as she every hour proclaimed herself, the idea of being the only one of her country on the island, and being left with persons, not above half a dozen of whom she could speak to, and with servants whom she could not make understand her in the most common necessities, would be insupportable. Donna Isabella followed this counsel with repeated assurances of her protection and regard, promising to find a conveyance for me to England if I chose to return thither, or to afford me in her own house an asylum, where I ever should be welcome to remain as long as she could render it agreeable to me.

One effort more she allowed me to make to get an audience of Mrs. Dibart for the purpose of knowing from her what I could do for her on my arrival in England. I hoped after dinner I might stop her; but she was indisposed, and
would

would not appear: I sent to her when we had risen from table: Donna Isabella gave cards and a ball in the evening, and Mrs. Dibart was then dressing: I found I was now too great a stranger to be admitted to her toilet; though the time was, and not quite out of memory, when we had slept in each other's arms, and shared in common our scanty wardrobe.

I hastened to dispatch my own dress, and when I had finished, to my great comfort, heard that Mrs. Dibart was gone to what I must call the drawing-room, and that Donna Antonia, who was of the party invited, was not yet come. I went to Donna Isabella, to let her know what an opportunity I had, and to beg her to favour it. She promised that no one should interrupt us, and I set out, not without considerable agitation of spirits.

The

The door of the room was a-jar. I was entering it in full confidence that I should find my indignant friend there alone. I was stopped by hearing a person speaking as if in tears. It was, I was presently assured, Mrs. Dibart's voice; and I heard her say, O, vous etes bien cruel me conseiller a partir. Oh, you are very cruel to advise me to go. I imagined she was soliloquizing, and that I was her imaginary companion. I again advanced, not perfectly satisfied that her intellects were not a little deranged by her amour.

I now heard another voice reply, *Ce n'est pas que ce soit cruauté: c'est nécessité; il faut etre ainsi. Croyez-vous que je vous permettrois partir puisque je sais vos sentimens genereux, si j'en avais la moindre esperance de vous etabli ici proprement? mais pensez, ma chère madame, quelles suites auroit ce que vous souhaitez, et comme vous les pouvez*

vez souffrir. Je vous ai dit, j'ai dit à votre amie, Madame Antoine, que je dois non seulement mon rang, mais presque tout ce que j'ai au monde, à la bonté du roi. C'est à lui a me reduire au neant d'on il m'a tiré. Il me convient donc ne faire rien que ne soit agreable à lui. Epouser une dame non pas Catholique me priveroit assuremment de sa grace. C'est donc impossible que je vous epouseroit sans perdre même les moyens de vivre honnêtement: et je me persuade que vous dedaignez demeurer ici en un rang moins honorable que ce de Comtesse de Viana.—It is not cruelty, it is necessity, and must be so. Do you believe I would permit you to go when I know your generous sentiments, if I had the least hope of establishing you here properly? But think, my dear madam, what consequences what you wish would have, and how you could bear them. I have told you, and I have told your friend Donna Antonia,

tonia, that I am indebted to the bounty of the king, not only for my rank, but for almost all I have in the world. It is in his power to reduce me to the nothing from which he drew me. It behoves me, therefore, to do nothing that is not agreeable to him. To marry a lady not a Catholic, would assuredly deprive me of his favour. It is then impossible I should marry you, without losing the means of living decently; and I persuade myself that you disdain to stay here in a rank less honourable than that of Countess di Viana.

The person who replied in these discouraging terms to the most degrading overtures a condescending female can make, was, I was but too certain, the Count di Viana. What followed I could not distinctly hear: on the part of the lady it seemed a mixture of reproaches, sighs, and tears, and on that of the gentleman,

tleman, soothing professions of regard, and a repetition of what he had already urged. I thought he was quitting her, and I hoped the victory his, but presently I heard her, O foolish woman ! I heard her beg to speak to him once more before she made her final resolution. He consented. An assignation was accordingly made for the evening ; the terrace adjoining the saloon was the place, nine was the hour, and the conscious moon was witness that she failed not.

Almost petrified with horror at what I had heard, I had not for some moments power to stir from my situation. All fear of detection I was insensible to ; my regard for captain Dibart's widow urged me to go into the room ; and had the Count left her, I certainly, at all risques, should have obtruded on her, and avowed my having overheard what had passed ; but they resumed their conversation : I
could

could not, in such a frame of mind, determine on the spot what was fittest to be done ; and I therefore withdrew to consider. The tête-à-tête, I believe, proceeded, for I had had time to indulge in a hearty fit of crying, to resolve that no one, not even Donna Isabella, should know from me what lengths my warm-hearted friend had gone, and just to tell her that I could not get an audience, when a servant came to inform her, as a piping hot piece of news, that the Count di Viana was come, and in the drawing-room.

A large company, including almost all the gentry of the island, were that evening Donna Isabella's guests ; and the amusement would have been highly pleasing to a mind at ease ; but mine was not so ; and neither dancing nor cards having any charms for me, I chose to be a spectator, or perhaps to speak more correctly, a spy.

The

The Count, Mrs. Dibart and Donna Antonia Lebida, played ombre. They were at liberty rather before nine. As the hour approached I began to tremble. Mrs. Dibart had not vouchsafed me a word or look; nor was Donna Antonia at all more gracious; but the Count was as attentive and as good humoured as ever. I watched them incessantly, and wished one of the party to see I did so; but she was too much occupied. At length the Count looked at his watch, complained of the heat, and left the room. Mrs. Dibart, as soon as she decently could, rose, and was going towards the door: I had placed myself where she was obliged to pass me: she turned her head aside: I caught her gown as she went by: she halted, looked disdainfully at me, and would have proceeded. In a whisper I said to her, my dearest madam do not quit the room: I know where you are going. For Heaven's sake stop, and recollect yourself.

Not

Not at your command, she replied haughtily. Then, returned I, farewell for ever. With all my heart, said she, giving me the worst look she could form her pretty face to. She then broke from me, and pursued her way.

I kept my resolution of secrecy; and with grief I was forced to stifle, saw the abyss a woman I tenderly loved, and a man I sincerely respected, were precipitating themselves into. She, I saw, was the victim of her own weakness, and the dupe of Donna Antonia Lebida's cunning. Perhaps she perceived not when she first indulged in admiration of the Count, that it must terminate in love; or, perhaps, it might not have kindled into a flame, but for the fuel Donna Antonia administered to it. Mrs. Di-bart certainly was ignorant that a heart so extremely penetrable as hers, must, unless guarded by the purest integrity
and

and with the utmost vigilance, involve
its possessor in misery.

I had watched the progress of her attachment. I was witness to her pity for the Count's disappointment, and her admiration of his virtues. His compassion and generosity were called forth by her recent distresses, and she was grateful for his sympathy.

He pitied her that she had passed such dangers,

And she loved him that he did pity them.

Oh how grieved was I to see a man, who had, in one instance shewn himself a Scipio, now betrayed himself into the resemblance of an Antony! one who had braved the storms of passion, shipwrecked by the insinuating breeze of female blandishment! Who after this shall venture to promise himself, that as he has resisted a great temptation, he shall be

proof against a smaller? Or who can say
with Terence's Simo,

- ' He who struggles with such Spirits, yet
- ' Holds in that commerce an unshaken mind
- ' May well be trusted with the governance
- ' Of his own conduct?'

The next morning we were told to be in readiness for sailing, as the wind was fair, the vessel was completely ready for our reception, and waited only for us. We expedited every thing. Mrs. Di-bart, I saw, had now settled her plan: she positively refused to go with us, and shunned me completely, by keeping her chamber, and with an admirable degree of courage, declaring herself too ill to be visited, though Donna Antonia Le-bida had free access to her. Still, repelled as I was, I found in myself an unconquerable wish to say a little to her before I quitted her for ever.

At noon another message came from

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the ship, requesting us to be on board in three hours, as the wind was in quality and quantity exactly what could be wished. We all assembled at the Count's, whither Mrs. Dibart, inconsistent as ever, declared her intention of accompanying us. Our noble friend had prepared a collation for us, and presents suitable to our different situations, which, with a grace that enhanced the obligation, he compelled us to accept. He charged Don Carlos with dispatches for his court, and gave him the fullest letters of recommendation to the king's particular patronage.

When all this business was concluded, I aloud begged Mrs. Dibart, who stuck close to Donna Antonia, to favour me with five minutes conversation ere we parted. She could not decently refuse so modest and so reasonable a request; and I retired with her to a bow window at the farther end of the hall we were in;
for

for she would not trust herself out of the room with me. In a low voice, I told her, she need fear no reproaches of her conduct from me, nor any infringement of her right to act in all points as she thought proper: but, in case of my arrival in England, I wished to know her commands there, and what account I was to give of her to her friends. She replied, that as to the former she had nothing to say, but that she would have every thing, belonging to her late husband, remain as it was till she returned home, which would be as soon as she could with safety to her precarious health undertake the voyage: that as to the account I was to give of her to those who enquired after her, I might say what I pleased, but that the truth was, she was too ill to move, and that *having received a very pressing invitation from the Count di Viana, and several ladies of the island,* to remain there for a short time, she had been prevailed on to accept it.

At these words I shook my head involuntarily. It seemed the signal for her passions to fire; and nothing but the half-whisper she found it prudent to converse in, kept them within any bounds. Her conscience told her whence arose my regret; and she affected deeply to resent an intimation conveyed only by a gesture. After murmuring about her own unhappiness, and my ill temper, she said, I should, if I would not believe her, have evidence that I could not discredit. She then beckoned the Count, who immediately obeyed the summons.

Gladly, I am sure, if there is any truth in physiognomy, would his excellency have been excused this reference. Stating what she had said, she asked him whether it was not strictly true: he gave it a cold affirmative, and like a man involved in guilt, but not practised in it, he hesitating, faltering, and stammering, endeavored

endeavoured to vindicate Mrs. Dibart's resolution of remaining in Terceira. I made him a low courtesy, kissed his hand, returned him the thanks so justly his due for all the kindness I had received, and sincerely wishing him every possible happiness, retired. Exultation sat on the countenance of our triumphant Armida; but the poor trammelled Rinaldo looked ill at ease.

After repeating our acknowledgments of the hospitality and generosity we had been treated with, Donna Isabella, Donna Emilia, Don Carlos, myself, and their suite, went on board our vessel. The Count accompanied us to the water-side. Mrs. Dibart had not fortitude enough to witness our exit: she remained behind, consoled by her dear Donna Antonia Lebida.

I will not pretend to such disinterested virtue as to say regret for Mrs. Dibart

entirely occupied my thoughts. Concern for myself was as powerful ; and anxiety as to my future fate distressed me. In London I knew I should find, and could immediately claim, the three hundred pounds, I have before mentioned, as my savings, while with lady Cadwicke, which captain Dibart had, a short time before we left England, deposited for me in his banker's hands, with directions to lay it out in the funds : this, and what property I had become possessed of by the bounty of my Portuguese friends, and which, perhaps, amounted to one hundred pounds more in clothes and ornaments, was the whole of my wealth ; and that best teacher of arithmetic, experience, had taught me, that this altogether would not purchase me independence. Sickened with the casualties of servitude, however disguised, and dreading again becoming the slave of caprice, I turned my thoughts seriously towards a more permanent

manent means of obtaining a livelihood; and, let it not, my dear friend, degrade me in your opinion, or excite your risibility, if I confess that in our passage from the Azores to Lisbon, I resolved the advantages of commerce, and determined, if I could find a situation I liked when I reached London, to embark my little fortune in some kind of shop.

But the kindness of those I sailed with nearly counterbalanced all evils and dissipated every dread. They would not hear of my quitting them when we reached Lisbon: they made me promise I would stay with them, at least till I had a prospect of an agreeable settlement in England, and could conveniently get a passage and a protector thither. It was with reluctance that dear Donna Emilia acceded even to these terms: she honoured me by wishing I would entirely take up my abode with her; but to this,

sincerely as I loved and esteemed her, there were many national objections, exclusive of my longing to return to my native country, and to be within reach of lady Donachmuir, from whom I had heard nothing since my leaving England; but of the continuance of whose friendship I never for a moment doubted.

The heavens were propitious to us during the whole of our voyage, and we anchored in the Tagus on the tenth of May. In the afternoon of the same day, information being sent of our arrival, we landed, and went to the house of Donna Isabella's sister, a widow lady of high rank and great wealth. She received her relations with the most amiable affection, Don Carlos with little less, and me with the utmost good breeding, which my fellow passengers presently improved into something more cordial by a sketch of my recent sufferings.

Here

Here we females were to remain for a few days while Donna Isabella's house was got ready. Her sister immediately introduced me to a lady her next-door neighbour, who was my country woman, and on the eve of departing for England. I listened eagerly to these recommendations: the lady, I was informed, was lady Jane Alderway, a single woman of about fifty years of age: she had come to Lisbon in the preceding autumn, with a brother in a bad state of health, and who had died there a few weeks before our arrival.

Lady Jane's reception of me was such as expressed her value of the lady who introduced me: she said, she was returning home alone, and should have been extremely glad if I had reached Lisbon time enough to have made it convenient to me to have accompanied her.

Attached as I was to the family I was

with, I could not in my situation think this an opportunity to be lost, especially as I knew it was Don Carlos's plan, in case I grew impatient to return home, and could not meet with a protection I liked, to go with me himself. This instance of friendship it would have hurt me to have been driven to accept, as he must either have risked another unfortunate separation from Donna Emilia, or have left her soon after his marriage. I therefore enquired of Lady Jane when she proposed sailing : she said she had taken her passage on board the packet, which would sail the next morning if the wind was fair.

I looked at the ladies on whom I depended, and saw in Donna Emilia's countenance evident fear lest I should embrace this opportunity ; but Donna Isabella, who knew whither my wishes tended, and how desirable it was for me to have a female to embark with, left
me

me at liberty to do as I would, and convinced her unwilling daughter of the propriety of submitting to what she kindly said was as unpleasant to her as it could be to any of the party. It was then presently agreed that I should sail with Lady Jane Alderway.

Her ladyship spoke Portuguese with great facility; and Donna Isabella improved the short opportunity for conversation by saying every thing that could interest her for me. Before we retired to our chambers for the night, my prospect was somewhat brightened. Lady Jane had taken the whole cabin of the packet: my voyage cost therefore nothing; and she consented for the sake of my company to bear my expences to London, if I chose to go thither; but at the same time she expressed a wish that our connection might not terminate on our arrival in England. She said, that now she had lost her brother she certainly should

want a companion; and from the account she had of me and my situation, she judged she could no where suit herself more agreeably.

When she had proceeded thus far, Donna Isabella begged her to go yet a little farther, and by making some agreement with me, to relieve her from the anxiety she must feel while she thought me in an unsettled state. The business was, therefore, immediately decided when we met the next morning: Lady Jane offered me the post of her companion at a salary of twenty pounds a year, and in my circumstances it was not to be rejected.

We embarked in a few hours after this agreement was made. At parting, Donna Isabella insisted on my taking an hundred pistoles; but I saw no need I could have for money. She, however, forced me to accept five and twenty.

Poor

Poor inconfolable Donna Emilia, who was deaf even to all Don Carlos could urge to comfort her, gave me a general invitation to Lisbon. I could not, without manifesting my sorrow, quit persons who had so honoured me, whom I so much esteemed, and to whom I had such infinite obligations; but these feelings I soon found must be suppressed, for I saw they produced in the mind of my new patroness something like jealous resentment, and she said what was pretty nearly tantamount to a civil expression of concern at having tempted me away.

The progress of my acquaintance with lady Jane did not elevate my hopes of finding Sybarite luxury under her roof. I have told you her age. She was in person very much deformed, and of no very pleasant aspect: her temper, as far as I could judge by her behaviour to her servants, had more of vinegar than honey in it; but she was perfectly well bred

bred, and far from deficient in understanding.

Behold me, my dear madam, once more setting out afresh in the world in a situation that has little but expediency to recommend it, and perhaps a degree lower than I had been accustomed to; for till now I had never received a salary: but it was not for me to be nice. I had lost my steadiest friend: his wife had cruelly abandoned me, and now I must depend on strangers or encounter ten thousand perils.

By the time that we obtained sight of the western shores of England, I began to be extremely impatient for the conclusion of our voyage, and great indeed would have been my joy could I have subdued the painful regrets that rushed on my heart at this moment. These, however, I knew must all be stifled. Lady Jane professed herself a stranger to
all

all weakness: she abhorred the modern cant of sensibility; and I did not wish to disgust her.

After a pleasant passage of only eight days, we landed in safety at Falmouth, from whence we shaped our course to Richmond in Surry, where lady Jane usually resided. As my dress was entirely Portuguese, and consequently attracted very disagreeable notice, her ladyship went some miles out of her way to indulge me with calling at Mrs. Dibart's house in the country, where some of my clothes remained.

What that the human heart can suffer did not torture me at revisiting a place where every object so reminded me of my grievous loss in its former possessor? In tears I changed my dress; in tears I packed up the little that belonged to me; in tears I quitted this interesting spot, and in tears I left every domestic.

They

They had heard their master's fate, and were in the utmost anxiety for their mistress. I delivered her orders and rejoined lady Jane, who, on my entering the carriage hinted the uselessness of sorrow, and the unpleasantness of a melancholy travelling companion; but my feelings were not just then in my own power, and I saw she was not pleased.

We reached her house, which was enchantingly situated on the brow of Richmond Hill; and the beauty of the place with which I was very little acquainted, had a very pleasant effect on my mind. When I first gazed on the rich prospect around me, I thought myself peculiarly happy in being cast on such a spot, and resolved to exert myself to maintain my post on it. As I was to consider this as my only home, and my stipend as my only means of living with decency, I, as my sorrow wore off, clearly saw the propriety of accommodating myself to my

my employer, who, I found, professed superior intellectual endowments, and was a votary of good sense and reason. She detested vulgar prejudices and weak indulgences of the heart in opposition to the head. Rectitude of conduct was her plan of life: consistency was the greatest proof of understanding, and she abhorred versatility and caprice. — Well! thought I, who began now not to take the world so much on trust as I had done, I have this comfort, that whatever I suffer here will be entirely new, and I have the important advantage of knowing I am with a woman whose prudence I can trust.

Lady Jane was a stranger to all art and dissimulation: I therefore found it an easy matter to study her character, and in less than a month I was, I thought, perfectly acquainted with it. Secured by a natural frigidity of constitution, exceeding even my own, from those errors
that

that border on virtues, and from an unattractive person from any attempts to shake her system, she bore so hard on no wanderers from the paths of discretion, as those who erred in consequences of juvenile passion. An amour was of all crimes the most heinous in her eyes: a Gretna-green marriage was prostitution; and marriage at any rate no very commendable, though sometimes a convenient thing. Of the male part of the creation she had no exalted opinion; but of her own sex a still worse, because she believed, and could bring an hundred instances to prove, that the vices of the former were owing to the follies of the latter. In short, few of either gender escaped her censure, and no one, I may venture to say, enjoyed her love.

A temper such as this, however it secured its possessor against some errors, left her perfectly unamiable; for the follies of her neighbours were always compared

pared with her own conduct, and of course conceit and self-opinion followed. Want of regard for others made her selfish in the extreme, and the irascible passions she saw no harm in indulging, on what she called *just grounds*. She saw no harm in them, because in her own breast they were uncontrollable.

So much for her portrait.—In her style of life it was soon perceptible that she was, to a degree of criminal parsimony, frugal. According to her opinion it was *reasonable* that a woman of her large fortune and distinguished rank should make a show; but it was equally *reasonable* that it should be done at as small expence as possible. — She therefore, consistently with this principle, wore clothes that distance always favoured, furnished her sideboard from Sheffield and Birmingham, and was the first to patronize all *useful imitation*. Cards she deemed a *rational amusement*, because she found few

few persons her equals in conversation: this was, in some measure, true; but the *rationality* of the amusement was proved on far better grounds; for lady Jane played with uncommon skill and success.

On coming to Richmond I was extremely gratified by the sight of a splendid collection of books on all subjects and in almost all languages. This was an article of expence in which lady Jane knew no bounds: it would be ill-natured to say that her parsimony was one degree less than her vanity, because she really made good use of them, and allowed me the same privilege. She had a very good harpsichord, on which she played in a masterly stile; she had a noble pair of globes which every starry night called forth, and a complete collection of astronomical and mathematical instruments, with the properties of every one of which she was thoroughly acquainted.

quainted. You will see by this that her education had been of a very superior kind. It had been bestowed by a judicious and liberal father, who hoped to make up to her by these indulgences for the cruel neglect nature had shewn in her form; and had it met with an amiable mind, would, however bad her external, have formed a charming woman. All these great advantages she allowed me to enjoy on the very moderate condition that nothing should be injured.

But notwithstanding all that was unpleasant in Lady Jane, I soon discovered the worth of my situation. I was in a place and amongst people where I had no cause to fear detection. I knew myself to be perfectly safe against any dangers my troublesome face, which was beginning to recover its native hue, might expose me to: I had learned the folly of looking for perfect happiness any where; and I, in the time I am
speak-

speaking of, became perfectly content with my patroness, and charmed with the furniture of her head and her house. She was extremely civil, though never cordial; and I hoped our connection might last the longer for wanting ardor in the outset. My pursuits pleased her, and she forwarded me in them: my temper suited her, and she highly approved the insensibility I manifested to all that the gentlemen in the neighbourhood were pleased to say in my favour.

The duties of my place were easily fulfilled. I was to rise early; make lady Jane's tea at breakfast, and, as her eyes began to fail, to read aloud to her for about two hours at noon. I was then to attend her in her carriage, if she went only for an airing: I was to carve at dinner, and if she was at home without company in the evening, I was to sit with her. The least pleasant circumstance was,

was, that I must leave the room if any body came to her : but this too my pride soon learnt to digest : it was not a thing to be stomached by such a poor dependent creature as myself.

When I found myself tolerably firm in her ladyship's favour, I began to think of my own little affairs; and taking courage, I asked leave of absence for two days to go to London, for the purpose of calling on captain Dibart's banker for my dividends, and on some of the acquaintance I had formed there, and who were very respectable persons, mostly lady Cadwicke's friends. I told lady Jane the whole of my intention: the former part of it was immediately acquiesced in; but the latter, to my no small surprise, was opposed. Her ladyship never allowed *her people* to have *followers*, or to make visits: it only encouraged gossiping and family tittle-tattle. When I wanted to go out on business

ness it was *reasonable* I should have leave, and she would never refuse it; but visiting she did not understand, unless people had a home to invite their friends to.

I cannot say I much relished this renunciation of my connections, however slight or useless they might prove; but I saw the folly of resenting or resisting. My spirit had been pretty well tamed, and I contented myself with leave to go to the banker's, and to call at Mrs. Dibart's in Clarges street, where I hoped to find letters from lady Donachmuir, to whom I had written immediately on my coming to Richmond. Under an injunction to be back the same evening, which lady Jane thought highly reasonable, I set out early in the morning in a hack post chaise.

The reduced state of my wardrobe, of which nothing but the little I had left at

captain Dibart's country house was fit for *English* wear, had forced me to incur a debt that the twenty-five pistoles I had accepted from Donna Isabella would not cover. This debt I now purposed to discharge, by selling out of the funds a part of my little stock.

On my arrival at the banker's, whether I went first as it was my most urgent business, I saw not the usual appearances. It was, contrary to all custom, shewn up stairs, and into a room where were a number of gentlemen and immense heaps of account-book and papers. My business was enquired: I gave my name of *Mary Hamilton*. Then I presume, said a thick, short, important looking man, at the upper end of a long table, you are the lady whose name we have found in the books as a creditor for three hundred pounds. I said, captain Dibart had paid that sum in with directions that

it should be laid out in the purchase of stock.

We have, likewise, madam, said my informer, found an order directed to the firm, and signed *Edward Dibart*, the gentleman; I suppose, you mention, and who appears to be a very considerable creditor—I have it here.—He then drew a paper from a bundle, and read from it the following words :

‘ Gentlemen,

‘ As soon as you shall hear of my death, I desire you will pay to Miss Mary Hamilton, for whom I a short time ago deposited three hundred pounds in your hands, the sum of two thousand pounds which you by your receipt of this day, acknowledge to have been placed with you by me for that purpose. Or should she at any time, I being living, demand personally or draw on you for

for that sum, I desire it may be immediately paid her.

‘ Yours,

‘ EDWARD DIBART.’

The munificence of my deceased friend overcame all the surprize my reception had occasioned me. Unrestrained by the presence of those around me, I burst into tears, and was incapable of listening any farther to the person who had given me this information. A gentleman I had not till now remarked, perceiving my distress, and misunderstanding it, came forward to me: he addressed me by saying he was, though a stranger, extremely grieved at my *disappointment*, and should be happy to alleviate it. If I would give him leave to attend me home, and inform him how he could be serviceable to me, he would, to the utmost of his ability, exert himself for me. I well know, said he, the ill-natured construction usually put on such

offers, but you wrong me if you suspect me. My name is Cyril, I live in Saville row, where my character is very well known. I, as well as yourself, am a creditor on this house; and any trouble I can ease you of I should with pleasure undertake; for this is not a sort of business that a lady can conveniently manage for herself.

The way in which this civility was urged, brought me to my recollection; and ignorant as I was of money-transactions, I yet could conjecture what turned out to be the truth, that my bankers' were in effect, though not so proclaimed, *bankrupts*.

A short enquiry brought out not only a declaration of this misfortune, but of one which pressed still more closely on me. My three hundred pounds had never been laid out as captain Dibart had directed, and therefore on that as well
on

on the two thousand pounds he had bequeathed me, I could hope only for a dividend. It was necessary I should know what measures to pursue for obtaining even this poor recompence. My query for that purpose was answered by the little gentleman. Madam, said he, with all the *sang froid* of monied stoicism, there will be no dividend for any of us: the deficiency amounts to seventy thousand pounds, and as yet we find not *one* to answer it.

I was terrified at this dismal account, not so much because of the pecuniary loss, as because it would subject me at this time to particular inconvenience. The debt I had incurred, relying on my wealth, amounted to twenty-five pounds, which I now saw I had no means of raising. My stipend of twenty pounds a year, was no more than was just necessary for my decent appearance in Lady Jane's family:—how out of that could I in many

years save such a sum? or what certainty had I of its perpetuity?

I was waked from the reverie this had thrown me into by this same polite Mr. Cyril, who begged now to know where I lived, that in case, he said, our bankers' affairs should turn out better than was expected, I might be duly informed of it. I thanked him for his solicitude, but intreated him to leave me to myself, as I was not in a station of life to avail myself properly of his services, and his interposition might forfeit me my only dependance. He bowed respectfully, and retreated in silence; but when I rose to depart, I could not prevent his coming down stairs with me, nor his learning from my postilion that he took me up at lady Jane Alderway's on Richmond hill.

From the city I went to a scene of much greater torture in Clarges street.

My

My mind's eye here met not only the master and mistress of the house, but the image of the unfortunate countess Ismenini, she, who had been the innocent cause of all my wandering, and still more important woes; but even here was consolation: three letters from dear lady Donachmuir, which convinced me that notwithstanding my having written, she was, owing to a change of residence, ignorant of my fate. The first contained an account of herself and her son, and of her mother's having married the attorney, O'Tarb, and quarrelled with all her relations: the second was short, and kindly reproached me for my silence; and the third, Oh, what was my rapture and gratitude! inclosed a bill of exchange payable at sight for *thirty pounds*. The charming woman imagined I might want money, and not chuse to entrust her with my distress: she fancied that was the cause of my not writing, and in the warmest terms she pressed me to apply

to her in all emergencies. So unexpected a blessing re-animated me : I sat down where I was, to acknowledge the receipt of it, promising at a future time a more full account of my situation, and I returned to lady Jane with an aspect less likely to disturb her tranquil insensibility, and with a heart more than ever disposed to “ take the good the gods provided,” without murmuring at any deficiency.

Knowing now the whole of what I had to trust to, I resolved to practise all decent œconomy, to bear whatever was not intolerable wherever my lot should fall, and to suit myself to circumstances without any retrospect to better days. I, at my first leisure, replied to lady Donachmuir’s queries, by a detail of my miserable travels, and by saying I was settled comfortably and hoped all my sufferings were now at an end. What I feared would shock her feelings I palliated,

lized, and only gave her to understand that I had accepted an invitation from lady Jane Alderway to spend some time with her; and as I could not endure to be a continual drain on her purse, I carefully concealed my recent disappointment; but for the sake of justice, told her how generous captain Dibart had been to me.

In a few days after the time I speak of, having been out with lady Jane at noon, at our return I found on the parlour table a visiting ticket, *Mr. Cyril, Saville row*. I was told the gentleman came on horseback, and had enquired for me. I was at no difficulty to recollect that this was the name and address of the casual friend I had found at the bankers'; but, as with my usual and sometimes over-strained caution, I had sunk this circumstance in my report to lady Jane, some explanation of the mystery which I saw puzzled and dis-

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pleased

pleased her, was absolutely necessary for my justification, and her *really reasonable* satisfaction.

I therefore briefly told her what had passed between us : she smiled contemptuously at my account of his civility ; but approved extremely my rejection of it, concluding a nervous Philippic against the whole tribe of our lords and masters, by advising me to be on my guard, as she believed no man ever was disinterested enough to bestow *gratuitous* politeness on a pretty woman. My soul abhorred the malignant sentiment ; I could have told her ladyship that I had better reason than herself for professing misanthropy : but prudence kept me silent, and I was forced to suffer her in my hearing to give a distinct charge to all her servants never, if Mr. Cyril called again, to acknowledge I was at home, but to tell him, in which I confess her ladyship only anticipated me, that I received

ceived no visits. He did call again in two days, and receiving the haughty answer, begged to see lady Jane. What passed she kept to herself: perhaps, thought I, she does not care to feed my vanity: but on the following day, as if by chance recollecting the omission, she informed me that his visit was entirely on the subject of the banking business; and a mere civil enquiry after me, to which her ladyship, for my greater ease, added, Now do not you run away with an idea that he is in love with you, for I am very confident he is a married man. So much the better, madam, said I: but pray did he mention any hope of a dividend? He says, replied lady Jane, that there is no prospect of an arrangement to keep the house out of the gazette, and that a tedious chancery-suit must be got through before any one can know what they are to have.

Soon after, and when I was again from

home, I had a new visitor, a lady who had left her ticket. *Mrs. Semburst, Richmond Green*, I cast about who this *Mrs. Semburst* could be, but with all my pains could not recollect my having ever heard the name. Imagining that it might be some lady I knew personally, but who had changed her name, and not thinking it right to affront every body for the sake of indulging lady Jane, I said to her that I believed common civility obliged me, with her ladyship's permission, to return the call by leaving a ticket at *Mrs. Semburst's*, as she might be somebody I ought to see. With as prohibiting a look as she could assume, she replied, that if I chose to play the fine lady it must be elsewhere; that for her part she had no idea of dependents, who might be here to day and gone to-morrow, forming connections and keeping company in state. The dependence her ladyship adverted to was what alone in this instance kept me with her. I
was

was angry, but silent; and wrote as flattery dictated, a civil note to Mrs. Semhurst, thanking her for the honour she had done me, and begging her excuse for not acknowledging it in person, from which, and from receiving my friends, my present situation debarred me.

When I had written the ungracious billet I went to lady Jane, to request permission for the foot-boy to carry it, as without this form, I dared not set her cat to catch a mouse: Let me see what you have written, said she.—Nay, thought I, this is now too bad: we must soon part I see; for what I have said will certainly hurt your pride. The wafer was wet, and I complied with the command, not, I confess, without some pleasure in the idea that I should mortify the curious impertinent. But matters turned out differently from what I expected: her ladyship approved what I imagined would have affronted her: she looked
more

more consequential than ever, when she perceived her absolute dominion over me—she smiled when she returned the note to me, and observed that she did not before think I could have written so well.

After this accident, which I firmly believed must have separated us, I, to my great astonishment, found I gained on lady Jane's good opinion. She would not always suffer me to leave the room when visitors or strangers entered it; and when winter approached, and she began to talk of taking ready-furnished lodgings in London for three months, she seemed inclined to introduce me to some of her particular intimates. So improved was her conduct towards me, that I really had nothing to wish corrected in her, but her beggarly parsimony, which daily and hourly exposed her to contempt. For this, however, I was

was in no way responsible; nor did it considerably affect me.

We came in November to shabby lodgings in Marybone, and here my situation was such as made me wish for a return to Richmond. To save expence, her ladyship brought but a few servants, and I presently perceived that I had insensibly glided into the post of temporary housekeeper. My time was wholly occupied between the duties of the drawing room and kitchen. I was one half of the day a servant, and the other a gentlewoman; but as I knew it was but for a time, I resolved not to repine while I could stand under my burden.

In a few days after we came to town, lady Jane Alderway unexpectedly distressed me by her excessive kindness. She had an inclination to go to the play, and to indulge me with the participation of this amusement. It was a favour I

had no wish for, and which I could not prudently accept while the terror of detection haunted me. Some one among so many I feared might recognise me : I therefore declined it, alledging the impropriety of my placing myself on a level with persons of rank and fashion, who came there to be amused. Do not let that disturb you, said lady Jane, I always chuse to sit in the pit — one hears and sees, I think, a vast deal better there than in the boxes. I had now nothing to object, as my hat would be a protection in such a promiscuous croud : and if lady Jane Alderway was not too nice to take up with such a station, it did not become me to be squeamish.

The scheme was pursued ; and I had got over the emotions which were excited by remembering with whom and in how different a capacity I had last visited the theatre, when I began to wish myself at home again. — Lady Jane, who would
every

every where appear of importance, even in disguise, talked loud, and drew the attention of those near us. Her person was a subject of merriment to some young men behind us; and her uneasiness was manifest. She aloud remarked to me the indecorum of their behaviour; they heard her and were fully revenged; for with the most unbounded licence, whenever their tongues were at liberty they remarked on her in terms of disapprobation, and commended me with no less indelicacy.

After this I was no more taken abroad. Lady Jane was much engaged from home; where I knew not, nor what were her diversions. They were I supposed such as pleased her; for on a sudden she grew wonderfully gay; dressed like five and twenty, applied to the skill of her perfumer for aids to her complexion, and was much less censorious than usual on the manners of the world. She even
conde-

condescended, in one instance, to find an excuse for a young couple who had eloped together to the continent, and was all charity and good humour. She began to laugh at my insensibility to love; she would rally me for being a hypocrite, and was sure there must be some one in the world I was attached to. In short, the stoical lady Jane Alderway seemed, by some miraculous inspiration, to have discovered that there are certain passions and affections in the human heart not quite amenable to the awful tribunal of reason.

What all this portended it was impossible for me to divine; but the mystery was soon unravelled. Her ladyship was one morning busied in contriving the making up a gown just returned from the dyer's: it required more than one able head to make that enough which was in itself too little: I was called to assist; and so deeply were we engaged

in

in the important business of œconomy, that we were deaf to the knocker. Without any previous warning, the room door opened. *Sir Luson Linfield* was announced and my *quondam* husband instantly entered. I sunk into a chair at sight of him: he paid his compliments to lady Jane in a style of familiarity without noticing me. I would have given the world to have got away; but aghast with surprise I had not power to stir. He turned to seat himself: he saw me; he started and changed colour; and could not immediately recover his natural composure. I attempted to go on with my work; for as my terror subsided, my pride whispered me not to quit the field unless commanded. I could not entirely face him; but I perceived he looked at me by stealth and particularly at my left hand, to see if I bore any token of our marriage; but I did not, and from this I suppose he inferred that I acted as he wished.

After

After a short insipid conversation, in which my righteous bridegroom made a very foolish figure, he shammed hurry and rose to be gone. Lady Jane, who seemed to take his visit in good part, stared when he said he must go. She looked at him whose eyes I knew were at that moment fixed on me. The agitation of my mind had communicated itself to my countenance, and caught her attention: she asked me if I was ill, and advised my leaving the room. I obeyed; for I could stand it no longer. I heard Sir Luson go away almost immediately, and was soon after summoned to attend lady Jane in her carriage.

Here she began, as might be expected, to interrogate me on my change of countenance. I had settled my scheme of action, well knowing I should be questioned. She asked me what had so affected me: I said the sight of Sir Luson Linfield.—Is he a person you are acquainted

quainted with?—Yes, I knew him some years ago.—If so, my dearest Hamilton, said lady Jane in a tone of uncommon kindness, I beseech you, tell me what you know of him, and why you are so interested about him: I will, continued she, use no disguise with you: he has, for a short time, made overtures of marriage to me: there is certainly a great disparity in our ages; but that he does not seem at all to regard: he says he has a very small income; but as I really like the man, that is not an object with me. To confess the truth, preparations are shortly to be made for our wedding; and I dare say he came this morning intending to have talked on the subject. Now, therefore, my dear Hamilton, as I have told you so frankly what my situation is, do not conceal from me what you know of him. Have you an attachment to him, or had he ever to you?

I as-

I assured her ladyship, for whom I at this moment felt the utmost concern, that for my own part I was, as I had always declared, perfectly free from attachment to any man, and that I was confident Sir Luson Linfield was equally indifferent to me. I told her I would, if she wished it, disclose all I knew of him, solely with a view to prevent her being the dupe of a man, who was, I was convinced, as destitute of principle as of property. Poor lady Jane changed colour: she voluntarily promised inviolable secrecy and begged me to proceed. I began with saying that Sir Luson Linfield was, to my knowledge, a married man.—She was so disconcerted at this alarming intelligence, that I was fearful of saying more; but she soon recovered, and listened eagerly to me, while I told her that he had, a few years before, married Miss Macgilroy, niece, and at one time presumptive heiress to the earl of Donachmuir; that finding his expectations barked

balked by the claim set up in behalf of a son of the earl's, he had deserted her, and I believed had never seen her since the day of their marriage.—Good Heaven! exclaimed lady Jane, can this be true? Surely, my dear Hamilton, you must be mistaken in the man.—I replied, that I was certain of the fact and of the person, as I was present at the wedding; and that Sir Luson's sudden departure was in some measure a proof of his guilt.

My patroness was agitated to the greatest degree on discovering the insult offered her. At one moment she could give no credit to the story, at another her pride rose to resent the imposition. She was in a tumult of passion which foreboded banishment either to Sir Luson or myself. When we returned home, she made me repeat all I had said, and then sent to Sir Luson begging to see him that evening on important business, which she
said

said threatened to put an end to the negotiation between them.—Now, thought I, my fate is decreed : he will come in a fury and tell all—I care not ; for I cannot answer it to my conscience to stand by passively and see a woman, to whom, with all her foibles, I am highly obliged, made ridiculous or miserable.

He returned an answer which at once secured me and convinced me of the profundity of his cunning. To confront me was too bold a step even for Sir Lufon Linfield. Had he accused or betrayed me he must have confessed himself guilty. He, therefore, after lamenting an indispensable engagement that prevented his obeying her ladyship's summons to attend her, said he guessed at the business alluded to, but hoped her superior understanding would not listen to idle ill-founded reports against him. He assured her he had been made *a most egregious dupe* by a lady whose name he did
not

not chuse, out of regard to her, to mention; that he had discovered the cheat just in time to preserve his liberty : and that he could satisfy her ladyship, in a few words, that by all the laws of God and man, he was free to offer his hand where his heart was deposited. The artful prevaricating billet concluded with a promise to meet lady Jane at any time and place she would appoint, excepting at her own house, which he said he never could enter while her misplaced benevolence sheltered a person whose malice would, if victorious, ruin his fortune and character.

Such is the infatuation of love that these few lines nearly wrought on her to whom they were addressed, to reinstate the writer in her good opinion ; and she looked a little sternly at me. She knew nothing of Miss Macgilroy ; perhaps she might be a woman who deserved no better treatment ; perhaps she

had designedly imposed on Sir Lufon: he certainly appeared to have been very ill used: it would be impossible for her to get at the bottom of so mysterious a business, and where concealment was possibly so much the interest of one of the parties: she must therefore rely on her own sagacity and wait for Sir Lufon's explanation.

I had now gone too far to recede: I saw I must either drink or be drowned; for if I suffered my adversary to triumph, I left my own character to be tattered by lady Jane's unsparing tongue. Beside this consideration, I own anger had its share in my bosom: and spirited as I was by the danger I was involved in to attempt extricating myself at any rate, I would now have sacrificed every pecuniary dependence rather than suffer so unprincipled a wretch to boast the victory of effrontery and fraud over plain truth and helpless integrity.—Still, however,

ever, I postponed a disclosure of my particular interest in the affair as a last and desperate resource.

How vainly, my dear lady Catherine, do human beings boast themselves the uncontrolled sovereigns of their own actions! How little of free-will do we enjoy! At one time the atmosphere of judgement is clouded by passion or prejudice; at another we are impelled to act as others interest us; and not seldom do we feel restrained by some unseen and undefined force, which, while it leaves the intellectual being in the full enjoyment of its faculties, for the wisest purposes compels its corporeal partner to disregard its admonitions.

This power which the learned of one age, and the ignorant of another agree in calling Fate, operated in full force on me at this juncture; and I accordingly, why I knew not, acted in direct

opposition to my judgement ; and till an event you were a witness of corrected my opinion, bitterly repented the irrationality of my conduct. Why, said I, did I not trust lady Jane with my story ? Why did I not avow myself the injured Amabel Macgilroy ?—It was an unanswerable question : I can only say I felt it impossible.

To return to my narrative : I replied to lady Jane's insinuations, that the character of the woman Sir Luson had married was a matter entirely out of question : if he was married, it was sufficient to convince her ladyship of his principles and her danger. I begged her, for her own sake alone, to be cautious, as I was, I said, very well persuaded the woman he had vowed to protect and had deserted, would never prosecute any claim on him ; that she detested him for his cruelty and baseness too much to wish even that he should not marry again ;

again; that I, out of attachment to her, entertained the same sentiments; for that had I heard Sir Luson Linfield was about to marry a person for whom I was not interested, I should never have interfered. I added, that gratitude for her ladyship's goodness to me, and a natural wish to oppose the success of villainy, was what solely prompted me to warn her, and that it now rested with her to make such enquiries and act in such a manner as she thought proper; for as I had discharged my duty, I should interpose no farther.

Lady Jane was now all acknowledgement of the obligation she said I had conferred on her, and begged me to point out the readiest means of getting accurate information. I offered to write to lady Donachmuir, then in Edinburgh, or to give her ladyship lady Donachmuir's address, that she might satisfy herself: she accepted the latter offer, and

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immediately wrote, requesting her to transmit her without delay an attested copy of the register, if any such could be found, of Sir Luson Linfield's marriage at the English chapel on such a day with a lady who *called* herself Countess of Donachmuir. I had said *supposed* herself; but lady Jane put another construction on the sentence. By the same post, I privately wrote to my kind friend, intreating her not to betray me, but to send a strict and simple answer to the query.

Sir Luson was in the mean time under sentence of exile: he persecuted lady Jane with billets, every one of which I expected would point me out; and I was prepared at an hour's warning to quit my present abode; but he was as careful as I could be or could wish him; and I felt my obligation to him for a depth of craft I abhorred. He uniformly treated me as a dangerous person,
and

and called on me to prove him bound by any act which the law would not immediately, on a state of the case, annul. In all the abuse he bestowed on me, he was too cautious to give me any name, he only styled me her ladyship's dependent and her informer.

I all this while quaked for the event of my reference to lady Donachmuir; but I had no cause for fear. She relieved my anxiety by the return of the post, and just in the way I had wished, sending only a copy of the register, in due form, with a few civil lines to lady Jane, and to me a letter which I could boldly produce. She told me in it of the application, expressed her concern for the undeserved ill treatment *our friend Miss Macgilroy* had met with, and hoped vengeance would at one time or other overtake that cruel unprincipled wretch Sir Luson Linfield. How fortunate was it, in this critical business, for me that I

had signed the book only *Amabel Donachmuir* : had I run through my string of baptismal honors, *Mary Hamilton* would undoubtedly have betrayed me ; and though I was prepared for quitting lady Jane's service in disgrace, I could not yet endure the being proved the wife of a man I so heartily despised.

Lady Jane was, as may be supposed, disconcerted by this incontrovertible proof : she was vexed too at giving up her lover : she was indignant at the insult offered her ; and the ferment of her passions terminated in the wisest resolution she could make, that of breaking off the match entirely. She accordingly wrote to Sir Luson, and without condescending to a statement of particulars, briefly told him she saw good reason for changing her opinion and her measures : she begged all that had passed might be buried in silence, and that she might not be troubled with visits, messages, or letters,

as

as the first she should refuse, the second she should disregard, and the last she should burn. I could not but be pleased at her firmness, and still more at a determination she made; and which you will believe I very readily acquiesced in, that neither this affair nor the name of Sir Luson Linfield should ever again be mentioned even between ourselves.

Thus was I safely freed from a situation pregnant with danger; and it is due to lady Jane to acknowledge that she saw my conduct in the most favourable light. She seemed to shudder at the idea of the ridicule I had saved her from; but she was woefully soured by the disappointment: she confined herself at home, would see nobody, and in a few days prepared for quitting London and returning to Richmond. This was great joy to me, who now considered myself as firmly rooted in her good opinion and

regard. How wisely I judged I am going to tell you.

The day before that on which we were to leave town, lady Jane and I breakfasted as usual together in perfect harmony. The newspaper was brought in: she bid me read it to her: I obeyed; and got safe to the last side, in the first corner of which were some lines we had for several days been promised, and for the delay of which we had had many excuses: they were addressed

TO LADY ———.

Without hesitation or recollection I began to read,

Dear Lady ——— how vain each art!

How quickly seen the thin disguise!

That seeks to catch th' unwary heart,

And make some silly youth your prize.

With H——l——'s soft winning air,

Oh say, shall A——r——y compare?

And

And dost thou think, deluded maid,
By such like fool'ries to prevail,
And vamp those cheeks with white and red,
Which fifty-years have rendered pale?
With H——l——'s soft winning air,
Oh say, shall A——r——y compare?

I had got within three lines of the conclusion before I perceived to whom these verses, which had, in my eyes, no merit to boast but their malice, referred. I stopt suddenly.—Nay, madam, said lady Jane, superciliously, I beg you will go on; they are wonderful fine verses. Her sagacity had preceded mine, and she was, as I confess she had cause to be, extremely angry. What could I say? I could only reply to her expressions of resentment, that I was, and indeed I truly was, heartily sorry for the occasion. I pleaded ignorance: had my life lain at stake I could not guess the author. I suggested to her enraged ladyship that they could come from no friend to me,

as they inevitably must hazard me the loss of her favour. She began to be pacified ; and I hoped I had wholly appeased her, by sending to the printer of the paper a note requesting that no more such libellous wit might be inserted, as it would prove the ruin of the person it seemed to commend, by depriving her of the regard of a lady to whom she was under great obligations, and from whom she was receiving daily instances of the most condescending regard.

The storm was nearly blown over, and I did what I could to smooth lady Jane's yet disturbed brow. The penny-post came in : it brought a letter for her ladyship : her spectacles were not at hand, and I was ordered to break the seal and read the contents : she concluding it was a definitive answer to a treaty she was engaged in for a lease, and I more than half persuaded it was a *billet-doux* from Sir Luson Linfield. I did.

did as commanded : but lo ! what was it but a manuscript copy of these plaguing verses accompanied by a note intimating the writer's fear that they might not come to her hands, and professing himself the gentleman she had most favoured with a scolding in the pit at the playhouse a short time before.

The mystery was now unravelled, and, confounded as I was by this new distress, I yet hoped it would remove lady Jane's displeasure from me, as she must see I had no concern in the affair, and was as little disposed as herself to approve the joke. But her ladyship was never afterwards the same in her behaviour to me ; and with wonder I observed, that she who in a matter where passion might without much censure have obscured her judgement, had shewn such cool determination, now when a foolish man, who perhaps knew nothing of either of us, drew an invidious comparison between

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tween us, was not proof against the inroads of vanity and envy.

Regardless of her resolution to mention Sir Luson Linfield no more, she from this time seemed to delight in talking of him, and enquired particularly into the circumstances of Miss Macgilroy's marriage with him: this produced a sort of conversation which was far from amusement to me, and in which I was forced to be unremittingly cautious; and this reserve, as might be expected, produced in her ladyship's mind a suspicion of the knew not what. I was sometimes almost tempted to trust her with the secret, in hopes by this confidence to purchase a reinstatement in her good graces; but fear deterred me, and I so abhorred the whole of my former conduct that I conceived it must render me completely odious to any one acquainted with it, and be the means of throwing
me

me once more, not only a deserted but a despised wretch on the wide world.

Whatever might have been the consequences of a disclosure, I am certain that, with regard to my present circumstances, it could not have turned out worse than the finessing system I pursued. — Lady Jane after two or three long conversations of this sort, seemed, or rather I may say affected, to be more than ever in doubt; and one day soon after our return to Richmond, when I had quitted her to go about some business that called me away to a distant part of the house, she sent me an abrupt and peremptory command to attend her. I went. She soon relieved me from my suspense by saying she was extremely uneasy at many particulars in my conduct: she desired no farther explanation; but as the only method of convincing her she was not harbouring *one of a set of adventurers who had exposed their practices*
by

by quarrelling among themselves, or a lady too well known by the frequenters of those schools of vice, the play houses, she desired I would instantly decamp.

I could make no reply: I stood stock still. Her ladyship produced from her purse the sum to which she said my wages for the time I had been with her amounted; and with studied good breeding that made insolence insulting, she desired I would never trouble myself to make any enquiry after her. I took the money, scarce conscious of what I was doing:—she muttered, A pretty thing indeed to maintain dependents that set up for paragons of beauty!—I said nothing, but retired to my chamber; and after giving way to tears, and taking a farewell look of the beautiful meadows then covered with Nature's snowy vest, and the glassy Thames, which the faintly beaming sun of January was playing on, I, with the utmost regret at abandoning
the

the prospect which I looked for every day to improve, prepared for my departure.

Before I could be ready, I was informed that a post chaise was at the door for me. Lady Jane's eagerness to be rid of me had anticipated my wishes: resentment of her cruelty, which my strong feelings abundantly magnified, animated me; and I soon obeyed her. She stood at the dining-parlour window to see my exit.

Not knowing whither immediately to betake myself, I ordered the chaise to Mrs. Dibart's in Clarges street. The maid servant left in the house knew me, and willingly admitted me; and here I sat down by a fire she lighted for me, to consider what was best to be done in a situation where I had so much unenviable liberty.

Nothing

Nothing feasible occurring to me for present execution, I was obliged to accept the maid's urgent offer to make up a bed for me where I was, that I might gain time for rumination. The first practicable course that suggested itself was my requesting the protection of my invariable friend lady Donachmuir, and betaking myself to her in Edinburgh; but to this there were many objections. I did not much admire a return to Scotia's metropolis; and I abhorred the idea of living a useless burden on the bounty of another, who herself was not in great affluence: I therefore resolved against this measure till I should find all others fail; and that I might not be tempted to break my resolution, I made another to keep my distress a secret from her.

That discreet counsellor, my pillow, farther advised me on no consideration to remain in my present abode longer than

than I could justify it by unavoidable necessity, as Mrs. Dibart, if she returned, might, in the alienated state of her affections, be offended at hearing of the liberty I had taken. Accordingly I set out the next morning in quest of a lodging, and in my walk ruminated on the probability that I might easily, if I exerted myself, obtain the post of teacher in a school, or governess to young ladies; and for one of these situations, but with a strong predilection in favour of the latter, I resolved on trying as soon as I had found a temporary habitation. Lady Donachmuir I knew I might depend on for a character of me; and I hoped if I conducted myself with propriety, lady Jane's cruelty, which then appeared to me much greater than it does now, might be the means of placing me in a station of less absolute dependence, as I certainly had it in my power to earn my living.

A lodg-

A lodging I in a few hours found in the neighbourhood of Clarges street, and removed thither immediately. The next morning, having no other way of *publishing* myself, I sent to the newspapers I thought most likely to serve me, an advertisement stating my abilities and my wishes.

In the course of the following day I had numerous applications in reply to it. Some were letters desiring me to come to such and such *houses*, by which I presently found out I was to understand young ladies boarding schools, dignified into family mansions, with high sounding titles perhaps borrowed from the names of the carpenter or bricklayer who had built an adjoining row. Others were notes sent by footmen to desire me to wait on their ladies; and in the afternoon I had another species of visitors, young gentlemen who wanted a governess for a sister or a cousin: this I soon saw.

saw through, and requested no more such personages might be admitted.

Finding that, unless I chose to continue on the edge of a most dangerous precipice, I must seek after some one of the posts offered me, I read over my written replies; and prepared to obey the most alluring summons early in the following forenoon. It was from a Countess not far from me, of whom I knew nothing but her title: I was shewn up stairs; where waiting a short time, I was told her ladyship was from home, but his lordship would see me. This I did not chuse: I said I came to treat only with the lady: the servant laughed; and I felt glad when I got on the outside of the door.

From hence I posted to the fashionable outskirts of the town to a lady without a title, who stated herself to have a very large family, for whom she wanted a *thoroughly*
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qualified governess: the lady was not up, though it was past noon: she however admitted me: I found she had lately lain in: I therefore accommodated my steps and my voice to the compass of a sick chamber. As I entered the room, I really thought the carpenters were flooring the upper apartments, but I soon discovered my mistake. In the middle of the lying-in-chamber was a little boy drawing after him a tin toy which made an horrid uproar. In one corner was the last arrived infant crying with all its might; and in another, two children older than either of these, absolutely fighting. In an adjoining room I heard a miss squalling to the jangling of a harpsichord out of tune, and accompanied by the shrill violin, I suppose of her music-master. The thumping over head continued, and was explained by the lady herself to proceed from the nursery, where she said she had six more boys and girls. The major part of this troop
were

were to come under my management, with a proviso that I never controlled any one of them, as they were bringing up on a *new-fashioned plan*. I was almost tempted to ask the lady what need then they had of a governess; but sincerely pitying her station in this Babel, I assured her my abilities were not equal to the task, and took my leave.

In my way into London again, I called in the neighbourhood of Portman square, where I was informed I might meet with a very eligible post, that of tutoresses to two young ladies of high rank, and of such ages, as promised that their company might repay the toil of superintendence. They alone were in the room I was escorted to: they were lolling out of the window, but faced about when I entered: a violent titter and a well-bred whisper succeeded the broad stare they saluted me with. I looked in the pier-glass I passed to see if there was any
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thing peculiarly ludicrous in my appearance; I could discover nothing. The young ladies alternately stared and whispered; I all the while standing at the lower end of the magnificent room. At length, after expecting a long time, I ventured to ask if the duchess would please to see me: I'll go and ask, said the younger of my promising pupils, and away she floundered out of the room. I was now left to the sole inspection of the elder sister; and I will do her industry the justice to say she did not lose her time. Presently in came the other younger lady lugging in a fine boy of about six years old, and he was also lugging in a huge Newfoundland dog. Not a syllable by way of answer did she vouchsafe me: the little boy came up to me and stared in my face: the dog followed him, and leaping on me, completely demolished my apron, and great part of the lace of my cloak. The young folks, highly delighted with my danger, and diverted with

with my terror, by all sorts of incentives encouraged the dog ; and had not her Grace just then entered the room, I should have been in danger of my life.

The duchess expressed her concern for me, but less displeasure at the wanton cruelty of her children than was requisite. She had a very good-natured countenance, and spoke with the utmost affability ; but such was the interruption given to our treaty by the noise of his lordship and his sisters, that every word required repetition, and every other sentence was a plaintive request to them to be, what they were not at all disposed to be, quiet. I told the duchess frankly that my spirits were not equal to the vivacity of her family :—she said she was sorry for it, bid them mind what were the consequences of their rudeness, and giving me a couple of guineas to repair the mischief done to my dress, she with

great courtesy dismissed me. As I descended the echoing stair-case I could not but remark the tax her Grace paid for want of a little maternal jurisdiction.

Wearied with my tramp, I returned to my chearless abode, spent the remainder of the day in repairing the mischief of the morning, and after breakfast on the morrow set forth again in quest of adventures. To Cavendish square I bent my course, whither I was invited by a very unpromising billet. It was a Mrs. Somebody, a widow with an only daughter of eleven years old. Here, escaping all former inconveniences, I was immediately introduced to the lady herself. Well, young woman, are you the person that advertise for a governess's place?—Yes, Ma'am. —Well, sit down, and let me ask you a few particulars. My daughter wants somebody by way of a governess, for I
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am too much engaged what with routs, and parties, and concerts, and going to court, and what not, to teach her every thing from beginning to end, and she is a monstrous clever little girl. For my own part, I am not over fond of your governesses: I think, for the general run of them, they are excessive disagreeable people, like all half gentlefolks: but I am advised by my friend the duchess to take one for Juliana. Education, to be sure, is now-a-days all the rage, and certainly one would not have one's own child behindhand, especially as Juliana is heiress to above three thousand a year.

Enter Miss.

Mama. Oh, here she comes: here's my nice little girl: come, my poppet, I am going to hire you this young woman for a governess. Won't that be clever, my pretty creature? and then you know

you will be as great a woman as your cousins, lady Mary and lady Frances.

Miss. No, Mama, I won't have a governess? you know I told you so: if she comes I won't learn: I'll set her gown on fire as I did Nurse's.

Mama. Well, but my dear, won't it be clever to learn French, and when your cousins come to see you, to surprise them by asking them how they do in French?

Miss. Oh, aye: but I won't learn in a book: I hate a book.

Mama (stroking Miss's head) Well, well, it shan't have a book. We will throw the naughty book into the fire: my pretty Juliana shan't have any thing she does not like if she will but learn. I suppose, young woman, you can teach every thing *fashionable*.

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I replied to this *comprehensive* supposition that I could undertake all I had stated in my advertisement, and in various situations had picked up various kinds of knowledge, which I hoped might be serviceable to any young lady whose education should be entrusted to my care.

Every thing was going on tolerably smooth in our agreement. Mama seemed at a loss for something more to require; Miss was coaxed up to me; and as I was determined not to be squeamish or exorbitant, our terms were soon adjusted. I had just given a reference to lady Donachmuir, which I saw went a great way in recommending me, when in bounced a lady.—My God, sister, she bawled out, I am in such a fright—do you know what distress I have been in? the girl's governess, the demure trapes that I had such a good character of from the bishop's, has married my lord's chaplain.—

I am so provoked with the sly huffey, because she suited me so well, and was so good tempered, and I had no trouble—Do you know the creatures were acquainted when they were children, and so truly because they met again by chance, they must be married.—She has made out a fine canting story; was married this morning before I was up, and then came to tell me what a pretty trick she had served me; she had the assurance to doubt whether I would turn her away; but I sent her packing before I came out: his reverence, Mr. Saygrace, troops this evening.—For Heaven's sake, sister, don't have a governess for Juliana: they are the shockingest wretches in the world.—I intend to send my girls to school directly, that I may have no more plague with them.

Seeing me, and perhaps guessing by my humble station in the room, and by my appearance, that I came on some
humble

humble errand, her ladyship, in a corrected tone, cried out, My God, young woman, I hope my sister was not hiring you for a governess.—I bowed in silence: a pause ensued.—The dame of quality made a sign which her obsequious sister understood: they retired into the next room, where they staid long, talked much, and laughed loud. In the interim I slunk off, not being yet sufficiently humbled, to digest the treatment I saw I must expect in a house where an illiterate woman was governed by a misjudging sister, and a spoiled child. I left a message with a servant in the hall, that the lady's place would not suit me; and got away as quick as I could.

From hence I went immediately to Welbeck street to a lady who had sent her servant with a note, written in an elegant hand, and the civillest language, desiring me to come to her when it was convenient, if I had no objection to take

the care of two girls, one four years old, the other three, on moderate terms. I was shewn into a small neat breakfast room, and introduced to the most beautiful young woman I ever saw: the children she had mentioned, and another but a few weeks old, were with her: the two former she sent away, and then, after a short pause, and eying me from head to foot, she asked me where I had lived. I said I had never before been in the capacity I sought for; that misfortunes had unexpectedly reduced me to a dependent state, and forced me to seek a livelihood.—What sort of misfortunes? said she: tell me, and forgive my inquisitiveness, are they such as it concerns your reputation to conceal?

I started at so odd a question.—Nay, continued she, do not be alarmed or offended: it is the interest I feel for you that makes me perhaps improperly curious. You are young; you were not, I
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am sure; designed by nature for a servile station, nor are you accustomed to it: you are seeking one, that unless you are very cautious, will expose you to a variety of dangers and inconveniences. You, with your person must go into no family where there is a husband, a father, or a son, of whose character you are not well informed.

I replied, that whoever employed me would have no reason to distrust my conduct, as I was myself, and had been some years married; that as to character I could procure a recommendation from a lady of rank and respectability, and feared no enquiry. Then, said this benevolent stranger, on no account engage with me: I had scarcely sent to you before I repented it; but there was something in your advertisement that drew my attention. I fear you are ignorant that I am not a married woman: if you are, for the world I would not draw you

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into a situation that must either expose or degrade you: in my unhappy circumstances I must seek for somebody to take care of my children, who is either by age or person secure from slander or insensible to it. Such a young woman as you are, if you have hitherto escaped the corruption of this horrid town, which would to God I had never seen! I will not be accessory to ruin.

The tears came into her eyes as she spoke: she pressed me to stay a little while, and began to enquire into my views. I was not imprudently communicative; reserve was habitual to me, and therefore I put no violence on myself by only stating, and that very briefly, the difficulties I met with in my present pursuit. She, in return, as if happy to unbosom herself, told me she was the daughter of a country clergyman, with but very slender preferment; that she had been placed by her friends with a
mantua-

mantua-maker in London, from whom she had been enticed by the gentleman who now maintained her.

At parting she offered me five guineas which I declined accepting; and I quitted her highly impressed with her generosity and amiable appearance, and saying to myself, Why do not our women of virtue, instead of copying this class of unfortunate beings in their follies, imitate them in their commiseration of misfortune?

Were I to relate all the adventures of this day's pilgrimage, I should nearly transcribe that paper in the Rambler, which portrays the distress of a young woman in a pursuit somewhat similar to mine. 'Tis no fair side of human nature that is seen by candidates of any description.

My day's labour was again fruitless;

for though I guarded myself against every species of nicety, I could not accept the scandalous terms of persons who were anxious, even in the common respect due to a stranger, to shew how cheap they held those whose assistance they sought. Abundance of labour, and a very small stipend generally went together: to these I would not object; but proposals of this kind usually terminated with,—Well young woman, I suppose you have no objection to dine in the servant's hall; or perhaps—You will be to dine in the kitchen with the rest of my servants, for I keep no second table. I will not conceal that I had too much of my father's country in me to condescend to such society. In one instance, before I positively refused, I asked the lady with whom I was treating, whether she thought a person used to the company of footmen and housemaids would be a fit instructor for her children. She thought me very saucy; I in my

turn thought her very injudicious; *and so*, as Becky says, we parted in mutual disgust.

Almost dispirited with my ill success, I returned home again fatigued and disappointed. Farther application had been made to me. I found more letters and messages; and much less sanguine than before, I renewed my trudge the next morning.

In the middle of Bond-street I was much surprized at being stopped by a servant in a very shewy livery, who seemed to have run purposely to overtake me. He, with great good manners, asked me if my name was not Hamilton, and then presenting *lady Pope's* compliments, begged I would go back a little way, as her ladyship was waiting in her carriage, and wished much to speak to me. Suspecting it might be some trick, I hesitated; but the man assuring me

me that his lady knew me intimately, and pointing to a handsome coach which I saw he belonged to, I complied, not, I own, without some expectation that my capricious friend, Mrs. Dibart, might in her travels have met with a tempting title, and accepted him it belonged to.

The coach was hung too high, and the windows were too fashionably diminutive for me to see who was shut up in it. I fixed my eyes on the pannel; but could make nothing of the heraldry: the door was opened. I thought the lady a stranger: she let me come in before she spoke, and then I perceived it was no other than Mrs. Isborne, the blithe widow who had been so kind to me in my way from Edinburgh, and whose house I had quitted with her companion Miss Price, in such terror.

Her ladyship was overjoyed at the unexpected rencontre: I cannot say my
rap-

raptures equalled hers. From the first moment of my recognizing her, I was busied in devising a plan of escape, and by cold replies to her expressions of delight, I hoped to make our parting as agreeable to her; but disregarding my reception of her fondness, she overwhelmed me with it. The articles she had waited for at Hookham's were presently put in the carriage; and she declared I should go home with her, as *Sir Norton* would be charmed to see me again.—Oh, thought I, when her ladyship named *Sir Norton*, the mystery of your elevation is unravelled.—*Sir Norton Pope* I remembered was the baronet with whom *Mrs. Isborne* had so kindly endeavoured to bring me acquainted, and whose signature was to the letter which had frightened me away.

Not at all allured by a wish to gratify *Sir Norton*, I replied to lady *Pope's* protestations that I could not accept the favour

your she intended me, because I was obliged to call on a lady to whom I was going when stopt. Who? and where? were the next interrogatories. Bloomsbury was the part of the town to which I was really steering; but not chusing to risque so long a journey in such company, I named Arlington street where I had been also summoned. There her ladyship promised to allow me to call, if I would first oblige her by taking one turn round Hyde park with her, that she might satisfy her longing curiosity by asking me ten thousand questions.—I pleaded hurry, but in vain, and was forced to comply with a good grace.

The opportunity was improved as I was warned it would be; but I was determined not to humour her ladyship's inquisitiveness. She saw how little was to be squeezed from me, and therefore changing her plan she began to be extremely communicative of her own affairs.

fairs. She represented the pressing solicitations of Sir Norton which had prevailed on her to marry again, and informed me of her having discarded Miss Price, who had turned out every thing that was bad ; but not a syllable did she say of my abrupt departure. Her narrative and her queries ended with an instance of affection I was not sufficiently grateful for : she was certain, notwithstanding my reserve, that I was in an unsettled and uncomfortable situation, and therefore insisted that I should accept Miss Price's post, no hard one I confess, to which she gave me her word to annex a salary of one hundred pounds a year.

The offer was specious, and such generosity tempting ; but I was not inclined again to trust to the discretion of a good-natured, warm-hearted, thoughtless woman. No refusal, the most positive I could give her, had any weight with her ladyship ; and when she set me
down

down in Arlington street, I felt myself embarrassed in the highest degree, by her saying she should wait for me: she knew my business could not detain me long, as I said the lady I was going to was a stranger to me; and she would not be disappointed of the pleasure of introducing me to Sir Norton.

From this detested civility I saw no possibility of escaping, nor from a permanent situation with this too pressing friend, except my agreeing at any rate with the lady I was about to offer myself to, and who wanted a superintendant for her daughters. With anxious wishes, fervent prayers, and pious resolutions, that nothing consistent with what I owed to my character should be an objection to me, I mounted the stairs with the usual formalities.

The lady of the house was sitting at work and surrounded by her numerous
and

and lovely family, all of whom were busy. Whether it was that the real beauty of the scene struck me, or that a particular charm was annexed to it by my hope of security among them, I will not determine; but certainly I thought it a sight superior to any I had yet met with. What but my distress could equal my disappointment when taking me into another room, she, without asking me a single question, but with the kindest apology for the seeming rudeness, said, that though she had no doubt of my qualification, she could on no account admit me into her family. I earnestly begged to know what was her objection, as perhaps it might not be out of my power to remove it. She replied, with the most winning affability and maternal tenderness, I have a son in the guards, a gay young man, who at present lives in the house.

My vexation was so great that I could
not

not, even in the presence of a stranger, suppress my tears. The lady saw my concern and was moved at it: imagining it arose perhaps from pecuniary embarrassment she offered me money, which when I declined, she bid me sit down and explain my situation, as she was willing, if I required and merited it, to afford me any assistance. I then candidly told her in what manner I was hampered by lady Pope's fondness: she fortunately knew her and her origin, and therefore needed little to convince her of the reasonableness of my vexation. Be under no fear, said she, I will extricate you: my eldest daughter shall take one of the men and accompany you home to your lodgings. You shall go out at the back-door into the Green park, and you will be safe. When I am certain you must be housed, I will send a message to lady Pope, informing her you are gone out with my daughter: it matters not whether her ladyship is or

is

is not offended; and I think you will hear no more of her.

With a degree of gratitude for this kindness which increased my sorrow that I was excluded from the post I had sought, and made me almost curse the form Nature had bestowed on my features, I accepted the benevolent proposition; and the young lady, who I suppose might be two or three and twenty years of age, very obligingly made good her mother's promise.

I was so intimidated by this adventure that I dared not seek any farther all that day; nor had I summoned my courage the next morning when the woman with whom I lodged came up to me, and announced Sir Norton and lady Pope. After a moment's hesitation I resolved to refuse this ill-bred intrusion; but it was out of my power to exclude them: they waited

waited for no permission, and in they marched.

Had I not been very angry I should have been excessively confounded at seeing a person whom I had lately cheated in a way that nothing short of her own conduct could excuse. Indignation kept me up, and to all her ladyship's good-humoured reproaches for my slipping away from her the preceding day, and her representation of the trouble she had afterwards had in bribing the servants in Arlington street to give her my address, I answered by wishes that she had spared herself so much useless labour.—Not useless, my dear, she replied with most provoking kindness; for now I have you safe, and Sir Norton and I are determined not to go home without you: such a young woman as you are must not think to live alone; so pack up your wardrobe in a minute and get into the coach.—I firmly refused; and finding
my

my loving friends disposed to out-talk me, I saw I must risque every thing to preserve my freedom. I therefore demanded a patient hearing, and then repeating my refusal, I added, that unless they desisted from persecuting me, I would sooner or later make public a letter I then had in my possession, which would not at all contribute to their reputation. They affected ignorance, and required me to produce this letter, but I had it safe, and did not chuse to trust it in their hands. I remembered enough of its contents, though I had not looked at it since I fetched it from Mrs. Dibart's in Surry, to give them a pretty good idea of its authenticity.

The most malignant and most virulent abuse was now poured out on me by both parties; and I was in the height of distress, when a note was brought me from my new friend in Arlington street. A lady of her acquaintance who lived in
Audley

Audley square wanted a person of my description, and she had no doubt would engage me if I went to her directly, for which purpose, as the weather was bad, she had sent me her carriage. Glad to the heart not only of the probable engagement but of the release, I with fresh spirit renewed my threat to lady Pope; and having seen her and her good-for-nothing husband out, I set off in high glee for Audley square.

Two elderly ladies were sitting in the drawing room, one of whom appeared the mistress of the house; the other a visitor. To the former I shewed the billet I had been honoured with. She desired me to sit down, said she had not expected me so soon, and told her friend she must beg her excuse if she entertained her with engaging a governess for her granddaughter. There was nothing in her manner to intimidate me: she proceeded to the common questions; and matters were

were going on prosperously when the visitor lady asked me if I was not the young woman she had seen some weeks before in the pit at Drury lane with lady Jane Alderway. Now, thought I, I am ruined here.—I replied, that I was there at the time she mentioned, and very much annoyed by the rudeness of some gentlemen near us.—The lady said she saw the whole, and had pitied me extremely; but, added she, if lady Jane will place herself in the pit, she and her party must be content with pit manners.—I took courage.—Did you live with lady Jane? said the mistress of the house.—I said, I did as companion.—And why have you quitted her? she asked.

I scarce knew what to say.—I hesitated: she shook her head, saying in a tone of regret, There is always some obstacle where one wishes to find none. I do not think, young woman, you

intended I should know you had lived with lady Jane Alderway.—I was silent: the visitor seemed extremely discomposed, and quitting her seat walked to the window. I looked again, to be sure it was not lady Jane herself:—it was not; nor in the least like her.

Knowing that nothing confirms suspicion so forcibly as hesitation, I grew brave, and said I was at a loss to assign a reason for leaving lady Jane, because it was so entirely out of the common course of events of this kind that it required much explanation: that some disagreeable consequences had ensued from the accident at the play-house, which had abated her ladyship's regard for me; but that she rested her dismissal of me on my having, perhaps too officiously, but with an intention perfectly upright, interfered to save her from becoming the dupe of a designing person. I justified my intention of sinking my having
lived

lived with her by saying she had absolutely turned me out of her house, and in a way that left me no room to hope even for a recommendation to another employment.

I can guess, said the stranger lady, what was the business in which you interposed: the town has lately laughed at a match said to be in train between lady Jane Alderway and Sir Luson Linfield; perhaps that was the subject of your difference. I confessed it; and added that I knew some particulars respecting Sir Luson of which her ladyship was, and ought not to have been, ignorant. I had revealed them, and could not repent having done so.

Both ladies now encouraged me by saying I had certainly done right. I was happy when I saw myself safe over this danger. Pray, said she I was treating with, before we go farther, do satisfy

my curiosity about Sir Luson Linfield: you seem to know him: Did he not a few years ago marry Miss Macgilroy, she who was so much talked of in the north for her disappointment about her uncle's estate and title?—I am told she certainly was married to him, though he would not own it.

Will you, my dear lady Catherine, say I was deficient in self command, when I tell you I stood this *interesting* question without betraying myself? I answered that Sir Luson Linfield and Miss Macgilroy undoubtedly were married, and that it was that circumstance of which I apprized lady Jane, as it was not quite clear that Miss Macgilroy was dead.—It was an act of but common humanity, said the stranger—Ah, said the lady of the house, I knew Miss Macgilroy's father and mother and herself too when a girl. I pitied her because I saw her parents made a downright idiot of her;

her; but she rendered herself very odious as she grew up, by assuming very much on the strength of her pretensions. She was a lovely creature, as to face and person, if she had not ruined her beauty by art and affectation.—You remember, continued she, addressing herself to her friend, how unpardonably she treated my silly nephew Pynton.

My recollection alarmed me at hearing these words. I had not forgotten my cruel behaviour to a young gentleman of that name when in the meridian of my insolence; and though I was not at all mortified to hear these strictures on myself, nor was any one more sensible than I was of my former errors, I began seriously to consider whether I did not run too great a risque by engaging *incognita* with a lady who had such just cause of displeasure, and whose well-founded resentment might, if she ever detected me, render her deaf to what-

ever pity might urge. Nothing supported me under this terror, but my dread of Sir Norton and lady Pope, and that was forcible enough to make me stand my ground here.

Our treaty proceeded, and was presently concluded to my entire satisfaction; I had given a written direction to lady Donachmuir, and was to enter on my promising employment as soon as her ladyship should have corroborated the facts I had stated. Every particular being fully discussed, I with heartfelt gratitude for the liberal treatment I had met with, was rising to take my leave, when the visitor-lady begged to say a few words to me.—Were you not intimately acquainted in captain Dibart's family? said she—I replied in the affirmative; but with far less composure than to any former question.—The tears which his name ever taught to flow, streamed down my cheeks, and with difficulty

ficulty I related such particulars as might give an idea of my connection with the captain and his lady.—I said, that at her particular request I had accompanied them to America, and that after a variety of misfortunes, I had been compelled to leave Mrs. Dibart at Terceira to recover her health. The lady who had questioned me seemed extremely hurt at the emotion she had excited; and after a humane apology, that convinced me of her understanding and benevolence, she desired, before I went, to speak to the lady of the house in private.

I would, as good manners and my situation required, have withdrawn; but they would not permit it: they went into the next room, and before the lady I had engaged with could shut the door, I heard her friend in a loud whisper say, Break off your treaty by some means or other; never mind how shabby or ca-

precious it seems; for you must on no account take her.

I felt more mortified than angry at these stabbing words: I was grieved at what I thought unparalleled cruelty: disappointed so terribly at the moment when I imagined myself fixed in a comfortable situation, I was quite heart-broken, and little was wanting to have induced me to do as I had done in Cavendish square.—In short, I was on the point of departure, when the ladies, after a conference of some minutes, returned.

The visitor, whom I charitably regarded as my enemy, now addressed me: she said, her friend had yielded to her suggestions that I was rather too young to be trusted with the sole care of such a child as her grand-daughter.—I replied, that I was seven and twenty.—You do not look so much by seven years, she replied, and in the respect paid to a governor's

verness, appearance is greatly considered. I could not forbear saying with the tears starting in my eyes, Why, Madam, did you not make this objection before my hopes were raised? if you knew my situation, you would not thus have tantalized me. I then curtsied and retreated towards the door, almost resolved to starve rather than seek after any more places.

But stay, my dear young woman, continued this vexatious adviser. I am very much inclined by what I see and know of you, to engage you for three months, in which it is not improbable, if you prove what I wish you, I may find you a better place.—I was amazed.—But in what capacity, pray, madam, am I to serve you?—Oh, she replied, as if she had not hit on a name for my post, in that of companion. I said I had much rather take some place where I could be more strictly said to *earn* my living.—

The lady understood me, and answered, You mean where you would be less dependent. I like your spirit: I detest the slavery of a nominal companion, who is generally the arrantest drudge about a house; it is the most horrid of all dependence; and to keep any one subject even to my own caprice, I should think the most barbarous tyranny imaginable. But I assure you I have no such intention; and that you may not entertain apprehensions on this head we will make no agreement. I like your appearance and manners: something in you inclines me to love you; and therefore if you will do me the favour to spend three months with me on the footing of a friend, I will make my house as agreeable to you as I can, and shall be very happy in the pleasure of your company. And this I promise you, that unless you deceive me, you shall not leave me but for a better situation.

I hesi-

I hesitated and looked at the lady of the house. I assure you, said she, smiling, you may very safely go. Mrs. Semhurst is my very old friend, and one to whose care I would confide an only child.

At the name of *Semhurst* I started. It brought a confused recollection with it. After a moment's pause, I remembered it was the name of the lady who called on me at Richmond.—Pray, madam, said I, did you not a short time ago enquire for me at lady Jane Alderway's? I did, she replied. I had heard you were there; and I wished to have asked you a few questions.—About what? said I.—Oh, she answered, evidently embarrassed, about Mrs. Dibart.—Do you know her then, madam?—Yes, I was slightly acquainted with her before she married—my daughter was her school-fellow.

The words and manners of this Mrs. Semhurst had opposite effects on me: the former encouraged me; the latter made me a little suspicious. She repeated her wish that I would come to her, and added, that for my satisfaction she desired I would make all possible enquiry. Much, said she, you will not learn of me in Harley street where I live, because I am but just settled in my house; but I can refer you to several of lady Jane's acquaintance, who, I am sure will not dissuade you from making an intimacy with me. I would now have apologized for my affronting caution; but she would not suffer it: she said it was highly proper, and only served to convince her we should not part at the end of three months.

I took my leave, promising that Mrs. Semhurst should hear from me at farthest on the following day; and in my return to my lodging, I stopped to make

my due acknowledgement to the lady in Arlington street who had so befriended me. I told her what had passed: she thought the objection as to my age a queer one; but easily resolved it into Mr. Semhurst's desire to engage me herself. This lady, I found, knew enough of her to satisfy me: she informed me that Mrs. Semhurst had a son by a former husband, a very respectable young man, then out of England, and a daughter married to a gentleman of fortune in the country.

Longing to commence so desirable a connexion, I immediately as I got home signified to Mrs. Semhurst my sense of her unmerited goodness and my readiness to accept it. She answered this intimation, by desiring to see me as soon as was convenient to me: the next noon was appointed: she sent her coach for me and my baggage; I discharged my

my lodging, and from that time became her guest.

Mrs. Semhurst's behaviour to me in a few hours made me feel at home; and the knowledge I gained of her in the course of the first evening, did not shake my belief that if I did not find here a permanent establishment, I had at least gained a permanent friend. She allowed me to write immediately to lady Donachmuir, an account of my fair prospect; and exacted from me a promise that I would maintain my connections by receiving and paying visits in the same manner as if the house was my natural home.

The next morning while we were at breakfast, our society was increased by an abrupt visitor. On hearing a rap at the street door, Mrs. Semhurst smiled, and said, Oh, here's Miranda: some new distress, I suppose: she then began to

to warn me not to be surpris'd at the sight of the lady who she imagined was coming in : she is our next door-neighbour, said she, and a very extraordinary foreigner.

She had proceeded no farther, when a young female, genteel and elegant in her look and manner, hastily introduced herself. Seeing a stranger, she paused ; but a word of encouragement from Mrs. Semhurst brought her forward : she had in her hand an open letter, and I presently discovered that she knew but little English, and came to have its contents explained.

While this was doing, I could not detach my eyes from the young lady. I remarked great symmetry in her features, and the most pleasing expression in her countenance : she had fine eyes, fine teeth, and long glossy black hair, which without any assistance, or any decoration

coration but a simple ribbon, covered her shoulders in a profusion of ringlets. Her person was exquisitely formed, and her motions highly graceful; but she was almost a negro. The hue of her skin perhaps wanted some shades of the deep African dye; but it had passed the degree of copper colour.

When her queries were answered, and I had been introduced to her, she returned home; and Mrs. Semhurst gratified the curiosity my countenance must have proclaimed, by giving me a brief account of this charming mulatto. She said, she was the niece of a Dutch gentleman who occupied the next house, and who had been originally bred up to the study of physic. His name was Vanderparcke, and this young woman was the daughter of his brother who had settled in Batavia, and married a negro woman there. Miranda had been left an orphan when very young: her riches

were

were immense, and this uncle was her faithful guardian, and only relation in England. She had been here only a year; and Dutch being her native language, she was frequently at a loss to express herself, though she had already made a wonderful progress; but the attainment of our language was impeded by Dr. Vanderparcke's ignorance of it, and therefore it was that she applied on all occasions to Mrs. Semhurft who had known her from her first arrival.—To this account she added great encomiums on Miranda, who, though but eighteen years of age appeared to have reached an uncommon pitch of excellence.

A few days made this ebony-beauty as familiar with me as with her better-known friend; and such was my situation that my only anxiety was lest it should be too blissful to last. I received an immediate return from lady Donachmuir, not only congratulating me on my new acqui-

acquisition, and saying whatever could recommend me; but inclosing bills to the amount of fifty pounds. I availed myself of Mrs. Semhurft's permission by renewing my acquaintance with such of lady Cadwicke's and Mrs. Dibart's friends as I thought would be acceptable visitors to my patroness; and I blest lady Jane Alderway's cruelty.

Mrs. Semhurft in a few days after I came to her, mentioned Mrs. Agthorpe as her daughter; but made no mention of her son. It did not become me to be inquisitive where I supposed there was a reason for concealment; but a letter being brought to her one morning when Miranda and I were with her, she could not forbear crying out as she looked at the direction, Thank Heaven, it is from my son.—From *Mr. Cyril*? said Miranda.—I started involuntarily—Mrs. Semhurft changed colour, and looked at me, while Miranda eagerly glancing

glancing at the writing, kissed the seal with the utmost affection and respect, and returned it to Mrs. Semhurft, who opened and read it in silence, I all the while tormented with fears of I knew not what.

I had never from any one heard Mr. Cyril's name, and I now, made suspicious by deceit, feared it had been secreted for some purpose which would be fatal to my present enjoyments. But Mrs. Semhurft, as soon as she had perused the letter, and pointed out to Miranda a paragraph intended for her decyphering, relieved my torturing anxiety by saying I was perhaps surprised at hearing she had a son.—I did not intend, said she, to have told you of him till you had lived with me long enough to be satisfied of my prudent regard for you, lest at the first notice of a young man here you should have taken wing. You have no cause of alarm, she added, for

for Cyril is very sober and well inclined: his letter says I may expect him in a few weeks as he leaves Rome this day; but I assure you, Miss Hamilton, that though he comes sooner than I supposed he would think of returning, I will not expose you to the malice of the world by suffering him to live at home. He will be very happy in your society when he visits here; but I must remember I have a ward's interests to consult now.

Grateful as I felt for such extraordinary attention and kindness, I could not but represent to Mrs. Semhurst the propriety of my rather withdrawing from her house. This she opposed strenuously; and I 'nothing loth,' submitted to her decision. At that moment I wanted nothing but the absence of Miss Vanderparcke to have courageously disclosed to Mrs. Semhurst my peculiar situation, but this spark of bravery was soon extinguished.—I dreaded the re-

sent-

sentment of the lady in Audley square, who was often with us, and when Miranda was gone I employed the opportunity only in learning that this Mr. Cyril was the identical person who had expressed so much concern for me at my bankers'. His mother accounted for the visits he had designed me, by his wish to assist me in recovering a part of my property, and said it was his report of my distress that had induced her to call on me while at Richmond, and had informed her of my connection with captain Dibart's family.

Two months of the three to which my invitation extended, had slid away in a manner that sunk all past evils in present enjoyment. Mrs. Semhurst was lady Cadwicke to me, Miranda was a sister; and in forwarding her in her various and eager pursuit of improvement, I found a constant source of entertainment and delight. Knowing the period for which I
was

was engaged, she obtained from Mrs. Semhurft and myself, a promise that if we at its expiration chose to separate, I should fix myself permanently at Dr. Vanderparcke's, who, good old man! was almost as desirous as his niece that I should live with her: Mrs. Semhurft, whenever this was mentioned, put it off with an arch smile; and Yes, yes, as soon as ever I wish to part with Miss Hamilton, you shall have her.

Miranda's character of mind was as foreign as her hue. Her spirits were indeed 'finely touched:' the least circumstance affected them: joy would transport her to delightful frenzy, and the gaiety of her heart would operate on every joint and every muscle; but she had feelings so exquisitely tender, that did the distress even of a stranger but intrude with half a step on her most vivid pleasures, the exulting bosom beat no more with rapture; her joys were in an
instant

instant annihilated, and sorrow occupied her dusky countenance: tears of sympathy would start from her eyes, nor would she rest or attend to aught else while an effort to relieve the sufferer remained unexerted.

Soon after the time I am speaking of, we were for a while deprived of this amiable girl's company: her fine nerves required the sea-air, and she left us to go to the Kentish coast. Her letters now amused us: the jargon she wrote in was diverting, though not always intelligible, and her observations were acute and just. In this interval Mr. Cyril returned: he had been informed of the addition I had made to his mother's family, and received me with the utmost cordiality.

We staid but a short time in town after this. Mrs. Semhurst renewed her engagement with me for another three months;

months; she offered me at the same time a twenty-pound note which I declined accepting, as I really did not want money; and I went with her to her house in Suffex. Mr. Cyril went into Hampshire to make a short visit to his sister, and in about a fortnight after our removal, he, Mr. and Mrs. Agthorpe, Dr. Vanderparcke and Miranda, joined us.

Of Mrs. Semhurft's daughter, Mrs. Agthorpe and her husband, it is unnecessary and unfair to give portraits. I knew them never intimately; and as they are now no more, it is fitter that their actions should be their biographers than that I should attempt to design their characters.

Miranda's health when she returned to us was apparently re-established: the sports and graces attended the charming moor, and she attracted the utmost notice. But a few weeks made a lamentable

able alteration in her; she grew emaciated, weak, and hectic. We were all seriously apprehensive for her: she expressed a wish to return home: her uncle went with her: Mr. and Mrs. Agthorpe left us; and Miranda's increasing illness soon after drew Mrs. Semhurst again to town, whither Mr. Cyril and I accompanied her. He took up his abode in the Temple, and as it was a season of the year when London is emptying, our leisure was wholly at liberty to attend Miranda.

Soon after she began to droop, an idea had entered my mind, which all my subsequent observation tended to strengthen, that Miranda's malady was love, and Mr. Cyril the object of it. The playful girl had precluded common suspicion by the artlessness of her conduct and her characteristic simplicity. At her first meeting Mr. Cyril after his return home, I witnessed the ecstasy of her joy. Wild as

her native woods, and free as the gale that agitated them, she was ignorant of the cold reserves fashion enjoins, and all the hypocrisies of cities. What she felt she expressed in all the force of nature; and those to whose tuition she had been committed, saw too clearly the beauty of her mind to spoil it by imposing shackles on it. Miranda could do nothing reprehensible while Reason was her judge; for she was purity itself, darkly as she was arrayed; but Miranda sinned every hour against arbitrary fashion and servile custom.

She greeted Mr. Cyril in her first interview with all the love of a sister for a sister: she hung about him: she kissed his hands and lips with rapture; and when Mrs. Semhurst laughed at her extravagance she, totally ignorant of the cause of her merriment, replied archly, Never mind: colour won't come off. She tried, by repeating English words, to

convince him of her industry in his absence; and closed her account with inexpressible pathos, by saying, while she looked at him with extreme tenderness, and the tears gushed from her eyes—No praise—what could I do but learn when you away?

On the part of Mr. Cyril I perceived less emotion, but his fondness seemed equal: he called her his dear Orra-moor, his good girl, and heard with evident interest of her endeavours and progress; but I saw nothing in him that looked like that species of attachment which the dissimilarity of their complexions might have been thought to secure them from. He seemed to love her, but as a daughter; and as he had ten years advantage of her in age, the idea was not absurd.

On our return to town she again mended, and though weak, was able to visit us frequently. I now saw clearly

into her heart : she had felt her uneasiness increase while in the house with Mr. Cyril : she had fled him to get rid of it : her flight was inefficacious, and absence still more pernicious to her quiet. His presence again cheered her ; and that she might not again be compelled to fly, she was struggling against her internal enemy.

Attention to this amiable girl had called my thoughts from myself, and till she was out of all danger prevented my perceiving that Mr. Cyril's behaviour to me was not such as common intimacy, and our comparatively short acquaintance would account for. As his friends were for the most part out of London at this time, he was perpetually in Harley street, would stay late in the evening, and then, as if out of mere laziness, prefer sleeping there. He seemed to have no suspicion about Miranda, or, if he had, he endeavoured to damp her hopes by a mode

mode of conduct that should lead her to imagine him attached to me.

The same inattention that had kept me till now a stranger to this misfortune, for a misfortune it was in my circumstances, had likewise concealed from me the state of my own affections. I had always relied on the insusceptibility of my own heart, and was so convinced that it was incapable of love, that I never took the least care to guard it; but alas! how blind does self-opinion keep us! When Mr. Cyril's increasing attention alarmed me, and I was forced to think on the subject, I found I had not only to oppose whatever solicitation might assail me without, but also a most powerful advocate from within. I seemed to myself like a person waking from sleep to the excessive glare of mid-day sun-shine. I rose from total ignorance to certainty.

Till now I had never felt for any man that esteem and affection which should precede an indissoluble union. Something I had always found to dislike ; and even where I could not but approve, my admiration was cool : it was neither in the power of figure, face, address, genius, or merit of any kind, to kindle a flame in my bosom.

It is therefore necessary I should make some apology for this change in the texture of my heart, but I am not sufficiently a logician to offer any you would admit. I had seen Mr. Cyril surpassed in person and brilliant qualifications by many I had known with indifference : for the Count di Viana, who was the finest gentleman I had ever met with, I never felt a moment's passion. Captain Dibart's multifold merits, added to his love for me, never moved me : why then I was so attached to Mr. Cyril appeared to me unaccountable. I could
only

only decide, and in this Miranda's case confirmed me, that he was a man in whom what was excellent and elegant so happily combined, that it was impossible to know without loving him. Perhaps too the comparison I involuntarily drew between him and the man I had in my folly accepted, continually urged the merits of one as it heightened my disgust towards the other.

The thunder of conviction did not, however deafen me to the voice of conscience. Notwithstanding Sir Lufon's shameless rejection of me, I held my vow sacred; and being fully aware that cause for repentance is an aggravation of every calamity, I resolved not to listen where I could not do it innocently. The conflict in my mind was soon visible in my transparent countenance; and Mr. Cyril's expressions of concern at the alteration in me, did not tend to my quiet. I seriously deliberated on the necessity of

relinquishing my situation; and soon after, under pretence of uneasiness at living without exertion for my subsistence, I distantly hinted to Mrs. Semhurst the impropriety of my continuing to burthen her. She immediately understood me, and reminding me of my promise to attach myself to Miss Vanderparcke, in case I left my present abode, she asked me if I should be happier with her. I had, at that instant, in the depth of my gloomy meditations, forgotten this engagement, which however agreeable, now hampered me completely. I replied, that I was perfectly easy in my present situation, and only regretted it as burdensome to the kindness of others. Come, my dear Mary, said Mrs. Semhurst, let us settle this matter immediately. I know what is the ground of your uneasiness; Cyril is more here than you wish: he has obliged me in some measure to break my promise to you; but take my word for it you have nothing.

thing to fear : he is naturally attentive to every woman he meets with : you see that in public I exercise the utmost caution for your sake, and he submits to it ; but let him say or do what he will, you may set your heart perfectly at rest, unless you have a *penchant* for him ; for he is, to my knowledge, unalterably attached to a young woman whom I love sincerely, and to whom I hope, in a few months to see him married. This he will probably never confess to you ; nor would I have you hint at it ; but so it is, I assure you, and I defy even your pretty face and bewitching smiles to make him waver.

What think you, my dear lady Catherine, were my sensations when I received this satisfaction ? Shame was predominant : I could not endure to think on the error my vanity had led me into.—I was relieved of a great burden ; but such is the perverseness of human na-

ture, while my reason was all gratitude, my passions felt disappointed. Mrs. Semhurst made me renew my promise of staying with her, and voluntarily bound herself never to discard me till I wished a separation, or till, said she, I find you have deceived me. How loudly did my conscience at that moment reproach me with the assumed character I was acting under !

Miranda's health still fluctuated; and her uncle began to hint his apprehensions that her disorder was on her spirits. I said what I could, whenever the supposition was mentioned, to produce farther enquiry, hoping that, though Mr. Cyril's affections were otherwise engaged, some means might be at least found to restore her cheerfulness; but Mrs. Semhurst and he attributed her indisposition to constitutional delicacy of frame and change of climate; and many causes

were

were found for that which I could simply trace to a most obvious source.

I perceived that Mr. Cyril began to shun Miranda; and excuses were so often framed for his absence when she came to us, that I hoped his eyes were opened; but there was nothing hopeful in his aspect, and what indeed could there be if he was as his mother had assured me, attached to another woman? He was grieved when the dear girl was worse, and rejoiced when she was better; but neither grief nor joy ever appeared to render him at all flexible. On all occasions he would speak warmly of the incongruities of marriages; and affecting to laugh at any disparity in a married couple, would frequently say, though never in her hearing, it was almost as absurd as if he were to marry Mi-
randa.

My suspicions would, I believe, have
x 6 . been

been buried in silence with her, had it not been for an accident. A young lady had made Mrs. Semhurst a present of a very pretty drawing : it represented two persons of different sexes in interesting attitudes ; and a quotation from Shensstone's ' Love and Honor ' declared the figures to be Henry and Elvira. Miranda was extremely charmed with the performance, and would gaze on it with rapture. She begged to see the poem whence the subject was taken ; Mr. Cyril had the key of the book case, and was out. As soon as he came to us in the evening, she renewed her request. I saw some unwillingness in his features : he would have put her off : the language, he said, was too difficult for her ; the arrangement of words in blank verse made the construction obscure to a foreigner.

Still Miranda begged ; and he was forced to fetch the book. She then wanted some one to read it to her. Mr.

Cyril positively refused; and his mother took the book. She began to read, which she did with singular propriety: he interrupted her by saying he could not endure it: she read, he told her, with too much energy. Seeing him uneasy, she gave the poem to Miranda, who now read to herself. Mr. Cyril rose, as if leaving the room: he stopped at the door with his hand on the lock: he paused there; then returned, and went to the window, his eyes all the while directed to Miranda, who read with avidity, sometimes unawares articulating the words till her voice flowed away in tears. Still she read, her bosom heaving and her fine enlightened countenance expressing the sympathetic pangs of her soul. Perhaps ignorance of the catastrophe had led her to hope the story would terminate favourably: perhaps too she was ignorant of Mr. Cyril's pre-engagement, and had, in her own case, hoped the same. Be it as it might, when the imaginary

ginary Henry repulsed Elvira, she felt for her all she could feel for herself: the book dropped from her ebon fingers; her head fell back on her chair; and this charming girl exhibited only the livid image of death.

Mr. Cyril's penetration had probably seen the connected interest, and prophesied the effect: this I am tempted to believe kept him in the room. He feared he should shew himself cruel by staying: he felt it was inhuman to leave her.

Her senses soon returned: the broken sentences she uttered before her reason could correct her tongue, left me no room to doubt, that in the misfortunes of Elvira she deplored her own; but that instinctive dignity which, notwithstanding her extravagant vivacity and fondness, she ever carried about her, soon put her on her guard. Unconscious that she
had

had betrayed herself, she attributed her fainting to weakness and the powers of poetry. I saw how much Mr. Cyril was relieved by her voluntary concealment of that which was too evident to be mistaken. He readily adopted her supposition of a cause in which he had no concern, and endeavoured to divert her attention and raise her spirits by reading some of the poet's lighter sallies.

But all was for the present inefficacious: Miranda was the child of Nature: she had loved naturally where gratitude first attached her, and the most respectable and amiable qualities riveted her affections. Mrs. Semhurst and Mr. Cyril were her friends and her instructors: to the former she clung with all the attachment that conscious need of support and thankfulness for it could produce. From Mr. Cyril she derived still more evident advantages, and consequently he stood first in her scale of obligation. She had a
mind

mind perpetually gasping for new ideas: he possessed the power of exciting them, and he was delighted with the task. The pleasure he found in informing such a subject, softened the accents of instruction: compassion for her local ignorance made him pity her; admiration of his knowledge made her esteem him. What then was to be expected on the part of Miranda, or what was to be wished on that of Mr. Cyril; but that his affections had been at liberty, and that he had had such optic faculties as might slightly have glanced over the hue of her complexion, and dwelt with due attention on the purity and excellence within?

And yet, partial as I am to Miranda, common justice requires that Nature, who taught her to love, should be heard in justification of him for not loving. The aversion he manifested comes into the world with us, and reason would in
vain

vain subdue : those who have overcome it are not the more esteemed for their victory : it is a transgression of the limits something within us prescribes ; and we can rarely think ourselves safe on this side virtue while we are doing what we involuntarily shudder at.

Miranda remained dejected all the evening ; and I could see she wished to be gone, yet had not resolution to go. We saw her not all the next day, which surprised Mrs. Semhurst, as her uncle was from home, and she alone. We sent in the evening to enquire after her : the answer brought was that she was not well and was gone to bed.

I went the next morning to see her. Dr. Vanderparcke was come home, and I found was alarmed at the sort and degree of her fever : he stopped me, before I saw her, and intimated to me his fears that her heart was the seat of her
disor-

disorder: he did not name Mr. Cyril; I therefore concealed my suspicions; but he begged me very earnestly to endeavour at learning from her what oppressed her. I could not refuse the good old man's request, and reluctantly undertook the painful office.

Miranda immediately admitted me to her bed side. We were alone. I began by expressing my sorrow for her illness, and enquiring into her complaints. When she had answered my queries in a way that convinced me her uncle's conjectures were as well founded as my suspicions, I conjured her, if she had any regard for me, to tell me whether something more than she had disclosed did not distress her. With a little intreaty, I prevailed on her to confess it was so, but it was a matter of far greater difficulty to get at the cause. At length she overcame her reluctance: she owned her love for Mr. Cyril; she blamed herself much more

more than I could blame her for the folly and presumption of this attachment; but as the last satisfaction she could receive in this world, she begged me to let her know truly whether Mr. Cyril had or had not ever made proposals of marriage to me. I assured her he had not; and lest I should excite false hopes in her, I added, that I understood he was engaged to a lady for whom his mother had a great partiality, and whom she expected him shortly to marry.

She smiled at this information, as if she did not credit it; and then wanted to know whether in case Mr. Cyril had ever made overtures to me, I would have accepted them. I replied, that I certainly should not, and that it was out of my power to accept offers of that kind from any body. She wanted the reason of my saying so: I did not chuse to give it her: I only pretended (O what an insincere pretence!) that I was indifferent

ferent to him, and all the world. This her partiality did not seem to approve: she was evidently comforted by hearing I had no passion for him; but she could not endure that his merits should be disregarded even where regard would have opposed her.

All she had revealed was under a promise of secrecy which bound me so close, that I saw no way of making her communication at all conducive to her recovery. Yet 'twas pity so amiable a creature should fall a victim to her own timidity, if, as her manner of receiving my intelligence indicated, Mrs. Semhurst was deceived in her idea of Mr. Cyril's pre-engagement.

In the completest embarrassment, I went down stairs to her uncle, who was pacing his study in visible perturbation. He endeavoured to put off his anxious looks, and with the benevolent smile
that

that usually graced his strongly-lined countenance, he asked me how I had succeeded. I was silent. *Ma foi, Mademoiselle*, says he, *vous ne pouvez pas parler: il faut que je parle au lieu de vous. J'ai étouté tout ce que ma niece a dit: je sais son amour: je sais ce monsieur qu'elle aime, mais c'est une affaire malheureuse. Je ne la blame point; je la plains de tout mon cœur; car certainement un homme blanc ne peut jamais aimer une femme noire comme Mirande.*—So, so, madam, you cannot speak:—I must talk instead of you. I have overheard all that my niece has said: I know her passion: I know the gentleman she is in love with, but it is a sad affair: I do not blame her at all: I pity her heartily; for certainly a white man can never love a black woman like Miranda.

Happy was I when I found good old Dr. Vanderparcke had rescued me from my dilemma. He excused his hav-

ing

ing listened privately by his foreseeing that whatever Miranda revealed, if his conjectures were confirmed, must be under a promise of secrecy, which he complimented me by saying he knew I should not be prevailed on to break. An offence more atrocious I could have forgiven when productive of such good; he could not however discover any good it could produce. I begged him to leave the matter to me at present, and I would consider what might be done. He thanked me with all the interest of a father for my attachment to his niece; but thought it impossible to save her.

What Mrs. Semhurst had told me respecting her son's affection for another lady was a grievous obstacle to whatever effort I could have made. But Miranda did not in the least credit it. All therefore I could endeavour at was to awaken Mr. Cyril to her danger, and to put it on him to convince her of this pre-engage-

gagement, softening it in the best manner possible.

I reported to Mrs. Semhurst as many particulars of Miranda's disorder as were untouched by my promise; and at my next meeting with Mr. Cyril, I began on the harder task of making him understand what I dared not tell him. He asked how Miranda was: I replied, Very ill, unaccountably ill.—How unaccountably? said he, her uncle calls her disease a nervous fever.

Yes, said I, a nervous fever it certainly is; but not a common one. If I might presume to advise, I should wish some one of her most intimate friends to question her whether she has not some secret grief that preys on her. Has she lost any near relation lately?

I saw Mr. Cyril change colour, a circumstance which I beheld with joy, as it proved

proved my scheme feasible. No, he replied ; but you know Miranda's spirits are always in extremes, and her nervous system is peculiarly delicate.

And to this delicacy, Sir, I answered, she will fall a victim, unless some relief is immediately found for her. How long has she been in England ?

Not quite a year and half.

Has she never been heard to mention any body of her own country and complexion that she quitted with regret ?

Never to my knowledge.

Is there any one here that she appears particularly attached to ?

He was too much confounded to answer me ; and without speaking a word, hastily left the room.

My

My irksome task I hoped was over when I saw the manifest effect of a few words. I met Mr. Cyril no more till the evening, and then in a large company. He drew me to a window, and seemed desirous of renewing the conversation. He enquired after Miranda. I did not soften my account of the state she was in. He replied by expressing his extreme concern, and added, You hinted, this morning, apprehensions that Miranda might be particularly attached to some one amongst her acquaintance: I have since been endeavouring to recollect all the probable persons who visit at her uncle's; but it is hard to fix on any body. I wanted to advise with you how we should act. I have not yet mentioned the subject to my mother, nor should I chuse her to be troubled with it yet; but every thing possible must and shall, at all events, be done to save the dear girl.

Supposing, Sir, said I, you were to see her and tell her our fears: she is so ingenuous, and under so little restraint with you, that I think you could get this mighty secret out.

Well, well, perhaps that may be a good way; but first let me have a little conversation on this business with you. Granting it to be as you suggest, and that I get at the knowledge of this secret, how must we proceed afterwards, if she should confess an attachment to any friend of mine?

First, said I, interrupting him, be careful to make no promise of secrecy. She will be satisfied if you promise to be guided only by your regard for her peace. Immediately then communicate to your friend the state she is reduced to, as the result of your own observation; and if his affections are not otherwise engaged, put it to his honour and humanity,

nity, whether in favour of a few narrow prejudices, he will suffer a being so near perfection to be lost to the world.

Good Heaven! replied Mr. Cyril, you reason too closely, Miss Hamilton. I will do whatever is in my power for our friend; but do let us for one moment discuss these prejudices that you term narrow. Can you call it a narrow prejudice to dislike Miranda's colour?

It is a narrow prejudice, I answered while my conscience aloud contradicted me, that makes the difference of her colour perceptible. I grant that in ten thousand instances it would be justifiable to encourage a dislike of this sort; but Miranda's mind is of such transcendent purity, that its habitation ought not to be looked at. Blanch her, and you yourself, Mr. Cyril, have often said she would be a complete beauty. I protest, for my own part, that though her first appear-

ance struck me, I am now, from being accustomed to her, not at all aware that she is not of my complexion.

"This may be true, rejoined Mr. Cyril, in the commerce of friendship only; but how could I ask any friend of mine to marry a woman whom he must forget he sees, before he can see her with complacency?

And yet, Sir, you manifest no disgust at her approach to you: when she hangs about you with the fondness of an infant, you return her kisses, and play with her hair, as if you too forgot her colour.

'Tis true; but this is the consequence of intimacy.

Would it not in a very short time be the case with any one else on whom her good qualities operated properly?

It might; but there is another circumstance. What say you to a brood of tawney children?

That they would be living witnesses of the greatness of soul which induced their father to overcome what I still call *narrow prejudices*.

Well, but my dear Miss Hamilton, supposing for supposition's sake, the person she fixes on has any other attachment, supposing he confesses to me that there is a charming girl of *his own country and complexion*, with whom chance brought him acquainted, who forced him when he had no hope of obtaining her, to fly his country, and seek in the dissipation of the continent a temporary oblivion of his chagrin, whom he has again by chance met with, whose society he now enjoys, and who occupies every affection of his heart: supposing he adds that she is in a situation of life far be-

neath her merit, and where his fortune would be of service to her; that she is beautiful, sensible, accomplished, tender in her disposition, and humble in her deportment: supposing he begins in raptures to describe the lustre of her eyes, 'the lightning of her angel smile,' what could I say? could I desire him to quit such a creature, and, instead of her, take my Yarico?

The drift of this was now too apparent to be mistaken; and I could not but look on Mrs. Semhurst as deceived with respect to her son's attachment and her hopes. I replied, that admitting all this string of improbabilities, I would advise his friend to state the case to the lady he described, and be guided by her judgement; to which, I added, I would willingly refer the matter in dispute, as I was satisfied no woman possessed of half the perfections he had enumerated would accept a heart so callous to the sufferings
and

and merits of Miranda, unless betrayed into it by ignorance.

How finely you women preach, and how differently you practise ! exclaimed Mr. Cyril. When we poor creatures solicit you, and are dying at your feet, you see and you hear us unmoved. No lady thinks herself guilty of murder even if her lover falls a sacrifice to her cruelty ; but we are not allowed the privilege of a refusal, even where it would be justifiable.

I hoped I had carried my point ; and finding it difficult to keep up the indifference I assumed, I mingled with the croud. Poor Mr. Cyril remained for some time in deep thought. I was forced to leave him to himself ; for I had an opponent within, more powerful than even his prejudices.

He breakfasted with us the next morn-

morning. Our enquiry after Miranda was answered by a request to see me immediately, as in consequence of a bad night she was considerably worse.—I rose to go.—Stay, said Mr. Cyril, turning pale as terror itself. Go back, James, with Miss Hamilton's love to Miss Vanderparcke, and say she is particularly engaged; but that if Miss Vanderparcke will admit me to her breakfast-table for five minutes, I should be glad to wait on her.—Mrs. Semhurst flared.—You look surprised, madam, said he, when the servant was gone: I will explain to you my meaning. This dear girl, so justly dear to us all, must not die: I have reason to believe it is in my power to save her. Common prejudices, nay insurmountable prejudices, must give way to rescue her from the grave. You must, my dear mother, prepare yourself to receive Miranda Vanderparcke for a daughter-in-law, provided she accepts

me

me for her husband, which I am now going to try.

The natural good humour of Mrs. Semhurst's countenance was instantly clouded. I saw disapprobation engraved on every feature. Her wonder almost deprived her of the power of speech: at last she broke out.—Are you mad, Cyril? Do you know what you are doing? —Perfectly well, he replied: I am acting as humanity dictates, and as an impartial friend would, I hope, approve.

The servant returned with a message from Miranda.—She would rise immediately, and would see Mr. Cyril in an hour.

This interval was to be employed in convincing Mrs. Semhurst of the propriety of her son's conduct; and I would have retired: they prevented me. After a long discussion of the question, Mrs.

Semhurst appealed to me for my opinion. I declined giving it.—Oh, said Mr. Cyril, you need not ask Miss Hamilton; she is, I assure you, entirely on my side: so pray, my good mother, let no more be said on a subject I have revolved all night. Promise me you will be kind to Miranda: think how well you love her now; and let all the love I know you would have bestowed on another daughter-in-law, be, without injuring the rights of any one, transferred to her.

Cyril, said Mrs. Semhurst, very seriously, you are sensible I never thwarted any inclination of your's that appeared to me well founded. I will not, reluctant and disappointed as I am, oppose even this; because I see the noble principle on which you act. Your wife shall ever possess a daughter's place in my affections. I pity you; for I well know, however you disguise it, that you have had a violent struggle before you could bring

bring your mind to its present resolution. Be it as it may, you have my free approbation of whatever you shall determine on; but this I insist on, that after your marriage, Miss Hamilton shall remain entirely with me.

Mr. Cyril's ready acquiescence in this seemingly trifling particular was accompanied by such a glow over all his features, as I would at the moment have given the world not to have seen. It spoke too plainly:—it distressed me beyond measure:—it made me abhor myself for adding one more difficulty to those he had already to surmount.

At his appointed time, he went to Miranda. What passed I know not in detail; but he returned to us after an absence of full two hours, the most pitiable being I ever beheld: that his heart was agonised was but too visible in his countenance; though he affected a composed

cheerfulness. It was the sunshine of a stormy day.

To our eager queries about Miranda, he answered that he had left her better, and hoped she would soon mend considerably. Dr. Vanderparcke and I have settled every thing, said he: I have told Miranda I am obliged to go out of town for a week, and that I expect her at the end of it to be ready in health and spirits to receive me. Her uncle insists on our forming a part of his family at present: we have therefore no preparations to make. I have taken leave of her. You, my good mother, will send me an account of her health by every post; and now let Thomas get a post chaise to the door; for I must go down to my sister's directly.

There was not at this time the least apparent necessity for Mr. Cyril's making a visit to Mrs. Agthorpe; but his reasons were

were evident to me. Mrs. Semhurst was not so easily satisfied; but objected and enquired. He, as if fearful of being dissuaded, changed his mind to get away sooner: he would walk to his chambers and set off from thence: he would travel alone: if he took his own man he must wait for him; and he was sure he should not want him. He briefly bid us adieu; and left his mother not well pleased, and me the veriest wretch the earth that day bore. I began to repent immediately of all my timid concealment, and all my exertion for Miranda's sake: I was vexed with her, poor innocent creature! and was angry with myself; till meditating on the insuperable bar that opposed itself to what I could not but be convinced were Mr. Cyril's wishes, and I was too well satisfied were my own, I cooled into satisfaction, and felt grateful to my detested husband for having forced me to be just to my lovely friend.

I visited

I visited Miranda in the evening. Mrs. Semhurst had not sufficiently composed her mind to accompany me; and I saw she secretly abhorred the incongruous union. The love-sick moor was wonderfully improved in health; but in a state of frantic perturbation: she feared I had betrayed her. No, she was sure I had not; for Mr. Cyril had assured her of the contrary. She hoped the love he had so kindled expressed for her, was not the consequence of pity:—if she thought he would be unhappy, she would rather die: And yet, said she, looking at her pretty hands, who that is not of my colour can like it? Why was I not born in happy England? Why am I not of his complexion? Every body will cry out *black wife*. Mr. Cyril *black wife*—Oh they will so laugh! and I shall die.

I endeavoured to convince her that the eye is in the power of the mind, and
that

that it was her estimable qualities, the goodness of her nature, that Mr. Cyril regarded; and on which he must depend for happiness. She seemed disposed, or rather eager, to believe me implicitly: she would leave nothing undone that could atone for her misfortune: it should be her incessant study to please him and to improve herself in English that he might not be ashamed of her. And if, added she, my dearest Hamilton, if ever he say Miranda do wrong; Miranda foolish; Miranda vex me; pray tell Miranda, for she dies if Cyril ever angry.

Not to weary you, my dear lady Catherine, with particulars, of which I wish only to give you enough to enable you to judge of circumstances and characters, I proceed to tell you that the week of Mr. Cyril's absence brought his mother to a state of passive satisfaction with the projected match, that it restored to Mi-
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randa

rand a tolerable share of health and chearfulness, and at its conclusion found me in a state immeasurably removed from peace. Knowing my own shackled situation, I could, without murmuring, have seen the only man I ever loved, unite himself to a woman who possessed his heart entirely; but when I saw Mr. Cyril return with increased disgust, though firmer resolution; when I considered that, whether Mrs. Semhurst was right or wrong in supposing him about to marry, there certainly was a woman in the world for whom he entertained a passion; when I considered what must be his lot if this repugnance towards his bride did not in time wear off, I trembled, and again bitterly repented my interference.

His first visit on his arrival was to his mother: his next to Miranda, from whom he returned in a better temper of mind than I had yet seen him in. It

was

was a fair inference that it was in her power when present 'to charm down thought:' her conversation could always render her singularity forgotten; and this was a foundation on which I built a tottering hope. He was now all hurry for his wedding. The cause of this precipitation was easily developed; he had resolved on the bitter draught; he was doubtful of his own firmness; and he wished it over. On his return from Dr. Vanderparcke's, he asked me to go to Miranda, who wanted much to see me, and could not yet venture out.

O Hamilton! said she as soon as we were alone, Cyril has just been here, and will have our wedding on Saturday. It was then Thursday. Well, I replied, why not? You have no preparation to make. What should oppose it?—I don't know, she answered, shaking her head most piteously; but I am so so terrified.—If he should say I wish I had never seen black woman!

woman!—I don't know what I would have. Cyril cannot love Miranda. Cyril can love Hamilton. *Black wife* and laugh is shocking. I don't believe *black wife* can ever laugh. Cyril say, I will love Miranda, and be kind to Miranda for ever and ever, and let Cyril have Hamilton wife.

Interested as I was for this dear daughter of simplicity, I could not forbear smiling at her distress. It realized most forcibly the observation that the summit of our wishes is not the pinnacle of happiness. How strange is it that terror will always intrude on joy! Why does the hand tremble that greets a long absent friend?

Mr. Cyril was away from us till the dreadful Saturday. My time had been divided between Mrs. Semhurft, whose too reasonable dejection wanted more than my powers to remove it, and Miranda,

randa, whose nervous terrors I could not at all conquer. For many reasons, but ostensibly out of regard to her health, her uncle's drawing room was to be the Hymeneal temple; and as it was Mr. Cyril's particular wish that not a syllable of his intention should transpire, the matter was a profound secret in both families. A relation of his, whose elevated ecclesiastical rank superseded the necessity of a marriage-licence, was requested and had consented to perform the ceremony; and a quieter wedding, or one I fear less gratifying to one of the parties, was, I believe, never planned.

Mr. Cyril on that day dined at Dr. Vanderparcke's. Mrs. Semhurst and myself, who would both have gladly been excused, though we did not dare trust each other with our sentiments, went there about seven o'clock in the evening. It was with infinite pleasure I saw the negro-bride had taken uncommon

mon and most successful pains in personal decoration. She always wore white of the finest kind, unmixed with any colour, and now she was dressed in flowing muslin. Her head, her neck, her arms, were adorned with pearls that gave undescribable lustre to her eyes and jetty skin: she was in her bridal honours, as in every thing she said or did, simple and elegant. I could have paid homage to our Indian queen. Mr. Cyril I fancied looked at her with pleasure. I hoped his victory was less difficult than I feared; for who that had seen Miranda that evening would have wished her a shade fairer than she was?

Nine was the awful hour named; but the bridegroom was for anticipating it. We waited only for one important personage. Miranda gained nothing in courage as the time approached. The thundering of a footman at the street-door was her death-warrant.

His

His lordship entered, and paid his compliments to every one. His attention was attracted by Miranda, whom he had never seen before, but knew by report. He saw her terrors: he tried to encourage her, for till she was encouraged nothing could be done.

Mr. Cyril repeatedly begged no time might be lost, and by dint of cordials, Miranda was tolerably revived. She was asked if she did not think she should be better when the ceremony was over. She said, Perhaps so.—Then I will begin, said his lordship.

I saw Mr. Cyril turn pale: he drew me to the window, and grasping my hand with an energy I yet feel, he said, Regard me ever as your friend; but farewell for ever. He then turned from me with glistening eyes, and we arranged ourselves in due form.

My

My attention was now driven from my own rending heart to Miranda. The service proceeded. Mr. Cyril, with greater composure than I had expected, took her hand: she smiled at him as she gave it with inimitable grace.—I was comforted. But when he was to repeat the words that bound him to her, she stopt him, by saying in the most plaintive tone,—No, no, Cyril, no vow, no promise.—Miranda's heart fail—black woman die; but black woman never make laugh at dear Cyril. She then reclined her head on his shoulder, and fell, to all appearance, into a fainting fit.

The service was suspended: she was borne to a chair, and all applications resorted to in such cases were tried. With eager expectation we waited for the opening of her eyes:—but we waited in vain: the hand of death had sealed them; the power of medicine failed, and sweet Miranda waked no more; but fell a sacrifice

crifice to 'love and honour,' to her own too strong sensations, and too delicate frame.

Good Heaven what a scene did this bridal chamber now present ! Poor old Dr. Vanderparcke's grief was that of a doting parent for an only child. Mrs. Semhurft was nearly as insensible as Miranda. Mr. Cyril stood the image of horror and remorse : his accusation of himself was legible in his countenance. What then were my feelings who considered myself as the author, or at least the promoter of all this mischief ?

When every hope was extinct, Miranda's corpse was removed and committed to the care of her servants, whose grief was little short of our's. We prevailed on Dr. Vanderparcke to quit his house of mourning for a time ; and he retired with us to Mrs. Semhurft's. The poor old man engrossed more than his share

share of my pity, but he did not long survive to accept it ; for he followed his beloved niece in a few weeks.

Till that time we remained in Harley street, a melancholy groupe ; and as soon as Mr. Cyril had seen the last duties performed for Dr. Vanderparcke, we retreated to Mrs. Semhurst's house in the country, where we had for a month the enlivening society of Mr. and Mrs. Agthorpe. In this visit I thought myself fortunate in obtaining their regard : they were profuse in their kindness, and insisted on my accompanying Mrs. Semhurst to their house in the autumn.

Our grief by degrees wore away. Even mine, the best founded of any, yielded to the consideration of circumstances. Miranda was not formed for the happiness of this world : she had nothing to dread in another : why then should she be lamented, any farther than as a
loss

loss to ourselves?—and a loss indeed she was. It was a tremendous hiatus in our enjoyments that her death left: her society was missed; a branch of the family seemed gone; and it was determined that a return to Harley street, the scene of such griefs, was for ever impossible.

Every duty that humanity and friendship required had been duly discharged. Conversation on the subject tended to relieve our minds of the guilt we had changed them with; and I thought I saw Peace with her healing wing, though still with humid eyes, once more hovering o'er our dwelling. The love Mrs. Semhurst had divided between our deplored Miranda and myself, now centred wholly in me; and it seemed to increase as her sorrow wore off. But alas! Peace and I were never more hostile to each other.

Mr. and Mrs. Agthorpe had not long quitted us, before the horizon of my comforts began afresh to cloud. My stricter intimacy with Mr. Cyril did not at all diminish my secret attachment to him; but I was so fond of his mother, and so gratified by his society, that for the sake of these enjoyments, I would, and I was persuaded I could, have struggled effectually against it, if I could have believed him indifferent about me.

To procure the comparative quiet I was seeking, I took the wisest resolution I could have followed, that of ingenuously confessing to Mrs. Semhurst my true situation. After fully discussing in my own mind the propriety and necessity of a measure I still detested, I put in my pocket two or three letters of lady Donachmuir's in which she adverted to the circumstance of my marriage; as proofs of my sanity at the time of my incredible dis-

disclosure, and heroically fought Mrs. Semhurst.

She was alone in her dressing room, looking at a piece of beautiful painted taffety.—I meant to wait only till she had done examining it, and then in the humblest manner to entreat her attention, her pity, and forgiveness. — She asked my opinion of the silk — I could not but admire it. — I have bought it, said she, for a present. — I replied, choaking with my own distresses, that it would be a very elegant one. — Can you guess, said she, whom I design it for? — I supposed for Mrs. Agthorpe. — No, said she, it is for my new daughter-in-law, Cyril's wife : she is to have it for her wedding. You have heard, I imagine, from him himself, that he only postpones his marriage till a decent time has elapsed after the death of poor Miranda.

Heartily glad was I that I had not
M 2 yet

yet betrayed myself. What occasion, thought I, is there now for me to risque so valuable a possession as Mrs. Semhurst's favour? She has repeatedly said I could not forfeit it but by deceiving her; how silly then it would be in me bluntly to reveal my having done so! Perhaps a better opportunity may present itself: perhaps I can get lady Donachmuir to assist me in this delicate task.—At least I will postpone it for the present.

I had the courage to ask Mrs. Semhurst if I might be trusted with the name of her intended daughter-in-law.—She replied, it must for the present remain a secret, but it would soon be divulged.—I knew not what to think of the affair: an idea that Mrs. Semhurst deceived me I could not admit; her mind, I was convinced, was superior to fraud; and my situation was too low to require the use of it. Yet there was
some-

something strangely mysterious as to this match. She questioned me closely whether Mr. Cyril had never mentioned it to me: I could truly say he had not.—Whether the lady lived near or at a distance I could not discover: I could not guess when he visited her: he seemed to be entirely at leisure, and but for what his mother asserted, I should without hesitation have taken to myself the ideal credit and substantial misery of his passion..

I had imagined for some time after the death of Miranda, that his love for me, if he ever entertained any, was totally absorbed in his grief. It was, I believe, my own grief that led me into this opinion by blunting my powers of perception. Notwithstanding what Mrs. Semhurst had told me, I could not shut my eyes against what I thought conviction, nor persuade myself Mr. Cyril was indifferent to me, while every action and

every feature bespoke the most generous and the warmest attachment. So evident was my power over him that I was often forced to feign perfect health and chearfulness, lest his fond mother should be made uneasy by seeing him dejected.

Every day contributing more and more to persuade me that Mrs. Semhurst must be deceived in supposing Mr. Cyril wholly attached to the lady she said he was about to marry, I was compelled to admit into my mind an idea the most fatal to my own happiness, and the most repugnant to my sincere affection for him. Nothing but the impossibility of otherwise reconciling what I saw and heard can excuse my fears that he was at the same time obeying his mother in marrying a woman he, perhaps, once had ardently loved, and seeking to gratify a newer passion in a way he dared not avow. By this cruel suspi-
cion,

cion, which was agony to my soul, I was driven to resolve all his seeming virtues into deep villainy. Rumination and observation strengthened the terrible idea; and every thing warned me that I must quit the family.

The wretch whom law or misery exiles from his native shore, and banishes to wilds and hostile lands, he, and he alone, can image to his fancy what I suffered when my senses refusing any longer to be deluded, I was forced to admit the light of truth, and to see I had no safety, even from my own treacherous heart, but in immediate flight.

Whither should I betake myself? how shall I subsist?—Here were alarming difficulties; but a still greater was to be overcome. How can I inform Mrs. Semhurst of my ungrateful resolution? Hour after hour I spent in devising schemes and in framing imaginary
M. 4. speeches

speeches for this necessary purpose. I never went to her without a resolution that, before I quitted her, I would obtain leave of departure ; but who could voluntarily resign the society of one so tenderly attached to me, and so solicitous about me for the misery I must encounter as soon as I turned my back on her hospitable mansion ?

The only plausible method I could think on to save myself and my feelings, was to write to lady Donachmuir, and request her, notwithstanding my antipathy to Scotland, to find me some humble situation where, in obscurity and peace, I might earn my living, and when she had done so, to urge by letter my accepting it. I was not at all satisfied with my plan, nor perhaps should I have liked better the fittest that could have been formed, if it must include a separation from Mr. Cyril ; but my fortitude bore me up ; and I immediately set

set about the execution of this desperate scheme.

I took the opportunity of Mrs. Semhurst's absence from home one morning to write this agonizing letter. I sat down in one of the parlours, and lest I should run away from myself before I had concluded the bitter draught, I locked the door. I had scarcely entered on my task, after a comfortable shower of tears, when I was interrupted by the arrival of the post. It brought a letter for me, which, by the superscription, I knew came from a gentleman an intimate friend of Mr. Cyril's, who having occasion to pass through London, had promised to make enquiries about our ruined bankers, and to inform us of the result. I therefore, with due apathy, expecting to meet with nothing but *total bankruptcy*, and *not six-pence in the pound*, opened this letter. Its length surprised me; and I read with astonishment the following words; hesi-

tating even at the familiar address of the first, and turning again to the direction to be satisfied that it belonged to me.

‘ My dear friend,

‘ You enjoin me to soothe your passion, and the delay you are compelled to, by giving the first place in my letter to your adored fair one. I obey you, well satisfied by experience that Plutus is seldom heard when Cupid is clamorous. To Mina Holt therefore I consecrate this page, and deplore with you the procrastination of your generous wishes. To know that she loves you before you finally engage yourself, is a prudential measure, and the felicity of the discovery will recompence your present suffering. It is due to such a parent as your’s to give way even in whims; but really, in this instance, I do not see aught to blame or complain of, but this abominable delay which I hope will speedily terminate: her opinion must now be formed, and you have

have nothing to do but to bring forward some test. You say you are weary of waiting for a chance discovery; and with due gratitude to the gods for all their favours, you wish you could break a limb to try her sympathy.—Be patient; for even that test might deceive you: horror and feminine tenderness may wear the aspect of love without being any relation to that divinity.

‘ You see I talk hopefully. Not a word do I say of arming yourself with fortitude to meet a rejection, nor one civil offer do I make you of the use of my horsepond. Courage, man: Mina Holt, we all know, is a woman of sense, and the deuce is in her if she does not like you.

‘ On the whole, I think you have nothing to fear from the censure of any of your friends. Your income needs no addition: you have no family-pride to

be wounded by an union with obscurity; and as to the woman herself, she is an apology for any folly. You are one of those few happy mortals who may marry whom they chuse; and from your rapturous descriptions, and my more-to-be trusted observation, I do not see where you could have more wisely bestowed your heart.

‘Have I said enough now on the subject of Mina Holt? If I fall short of your commands, I must supply the deficiency by another post, for now I must proceed to business, as a short account of my commission is equally due to Miss Hamilton.’

So far had I read of this unaccountable and wonderful epistle when I was a second time requested to open the door. I obeyed. Mr. Cyril, who I knew was in a distant part of the house, entered with an unsealed letter in his hand. He
looked

looked uneasy, and asked me hastily if I had had a letter by the post just come in. I said I had it then in my hand, and had been extremely puzzled by it, as, though directed for me, its contents, which I had but partially perused, seemed intended for another person.— There is a mistake, said he, exchanging the letter in his hand for that in mine. Bellamy has blundered in directing our letters, and has sent me your's and you mine.

The matter was easily adjusted, and I could only beg Mr. Cyril's pardon for my stupidity in not discovering the mistake immediately. He held my arm while he ran over the contents of the letter I had read : I, in the mean time, read in my own such intelligence as I had expected. He had skimmed, I suppose, as far as I had got in his, when fixing his eyes on me, he asked me gently what I had learnt by the mistake.—

What

What I am very glad to learn, Sir, I replied, that we are to have the pleasure of seeing a *Mrs.* Cyril shortly.

And are you *really* glad of it ?

Really, and from my heart.

Why ?

Why ?—Why because it will please *Mrs.* Semhurst ; and I sincerely hope contribute to your happiness.

But you see the matter is contingent. I am waiting to find out whether *Mina Holt* is sincerely attached to me ; for I cannot take up with affection resulting from my addressing her : she must love me spontaneously. — I dread her being allured by my superior station. — Tell me, now that you are in the secret, and from *Bellamy's* blundering letter
can

can form some idea of her merits, what chance do you think I stand?

If you are intimate with her, and her affections are not pre-engaged, I think, Mr. Cyril, you have no cause to fear.—His eyes sparkled as I spoke these words, and our dialogue went on.

Tell me ingenuously, Miss Hamilton, have you not been crying?

Indeed I have.

And when? and at what? was it since you saw Bellamy's letter?

No, on my word: I was beginning to write to lady Donachmuir; and thinking I could not with propriety remain much longer here a burden to Mrs. Semhurst, I was meditating a request to her ladyship to find me a situation where I might earn a decent living; and this, I assure

you, Sir, it was that made me cry.—
You may see what I have written if you
please.

On no account.—I should detest myself if I were not satisfied with your word. But, my dear Miss Hamilton, how can you talk of quitting my mother? you would break her heart.—Come, you must make me a promise.

What is it?

That you will never leave her till I have provided her a daughter-in-law.—In a few days after I am married to Mina Holt, you shall, if you chuse it, be at liberty to depart.—Will you promise me?

I will promise never to leave Mrs. Semhurst as long as she lives, unless she wishes it, provided you marry.

Pro-

Provided I marry? what does that mean?

I had now in the perturbation of my mind said three words too many, and embarrassed myself. Mr. Cyril again required me to explain them; and I should have been driven to inextricable difficulty had he not been suddenly called away.

He saw Mrs. Semhurst on her return before I did, and informed her of the accidental discovery I had made. It was a discovery that again set my heart at rest as to my safety; but my affections were strayed too far to obey my recall immediately; and I could not but think Mira Holt a very happy woman, as I was now convinced she had no partner in her lover's heart.

Fearful my looks might betray me, I effectually avoided Mrs. Semhurst and
her

her son till dinner, and then would gladly have relinquished the unsavory meal for quiet solitude; but my absence would have brought on the enquiries I sought to shun, and I was forced to trust to hypocrisy. As soon as the cloth was removed, Mr. Bellamy's heedlessness, and Mina Holt were introduced as topics of conversation; and my opinion was asked as to the best test that could be contrived for Mr. Cyril's purpose. I could recommend none so certain as a plain question: the matter remained in doubt; I was made to drink 'Success to Mr. Cyril;' and as soon as I could raise an excuse, I got away.

My miseries now increased faster than the hours; and such was the state of my mind, that I began to fear it impossible for me to keep my word with Mr. Cyril. Instead of my difficulty being removed as I had imagined, I saw it multiplied, and scarcely capable of judging, I now pro-

projected, not only revealing *myself* to Mrs. Semhurst, but my passion for her son, intreating her to conceal my misfortunes and my weakness, and to allow me, at least, a temporary absence.

I had not quite digested this mad plan, when I was summoned to the tea-table.—I suppose I looked crazy, for Mrs. Semhurst, who, fortunately for me, was alone, stared at me, and questioned me. I satisfied her tolerably, not yet being sufficiently courageous to do the desperate deed. She told me Mr. Cyril was gone out, and had resolved to try his fortune with Mina Holt on the following day.—I said, I wished him success.—Oh yes, my dear, replied his mother, we know he has your good wishes, and I assure you, such is his deference for your opinion, that he is very much encouraged by them: I have been, added she, writing a short letter to my intended daughter, which Cyril is to give her if she

she behaves like a good girl; and I should think, my dear Mary, as I shall always consider you myself, and expect every body to consider you as inseparable from me, it would not be unbecoming if you were to write a few cordial lines by way of introducing yourself to her, and testifying your interest in whatever concerns a member of my family.

I replied, that I was ready to do whatever Mrs. Semhurst thought proper; but I scarcely knew how, in my dependent station, to address an entire stranger with propriety. She knows a little of you, said Mrs. Semhurst:—come, here's the standish; try what you can say:—come, begin, Dear madam——

I was resolved, whatever it cost my feelings, I would not appear ungrateful by obstinacy.—I took the pen and paper—the objects danced before my eyes;
but

but I dared not hesitate—What would you have me say, madam?

Say, my dear? why say you are very happy, extremely happy to find my son is going to be married, say how dearly you shall love his wife; assure Mina Holt that he is a young man she cannot but be happy with, and express your hopes that she will include you in her regard.—Come dispatch, for I want some tea—do it in a handsome manner—I never saw you at a loss before.

My passions were now wholly predominant over my reason, and hearing no voice but theirs, I obeyed their imperious dictates, regardless of all consequences. My fingers refused what gratitude commanded. I threw down my pen; and bursting into a flood of tears I ran out of the room, leaving Mrs. Semhurst to make what inferences she thought proper.

Com-

Company engaged her all the evening; and I saw her not till the next morning, having prudently retired to bed before she was at liberty. Ashamed of my folly and ingratitude, and somewhat cooled by a whole night of reflection, I, with a heart and countenance sincerely penitent, disposed to confess any thing I had been guilty of, and to write whatever she should dictate, sought for a private interview with her, before Mr. Cyril joined us.

Contrary to my expectations she admitted me into her chamber, and received me not only with her usual kindness, but with particular affection. I was beginning to apologise: she stopped me by saying she was so far from being offended that she sincerely pitied me, as she now perceived she had asked me to exert my faculties when I was either too *nervous* or too *hysterical* to command the use of them. She hoped I

was better, that I had rested well, and should have no return of so troublesome an affection, which she said she well knew by experience how to commiserate. She insisted on my taking some drops, said carelessly, that her son would not breakfast with us, and arm in arm we went together to the little parlour; I gaining courage from her mistake, and resolving as soon as my nerves were steadier, to conceal nothing from so tender a friend.

Breakfast concluded without any mention of Mina Holt or any disaster.—I asked Mrs. Semhurst if I should then write the note.—She said, No; it would be as well postponed.—I offered to read aloud. This she declined out of fear the exertion might be more than I could bear.—I then, scarcely knowing what to take to, but miserable while left to my own thoughts, sat down to retouch a trifling drawing I had nearly finished. Presently

sently Mr. Cyril came to us : he looked at what I was doing, and attempted to correct a line in it ; but his hand was too unsteady to command the pencil. As it was not usual with him, and that I might not appear quite stupid, I noticed it : he turned it off with a laugh. Consider, Mary, said Mrs. Semhurst, the errand Cyril is going on : a man who hopes himself on the brink of matrimony is, I must own, a precious drawing master.—I was silent, and indebted wholly to my posture, if aught of what passed in my mind was not observed in my countenance.

Mr. Cyril, still leaning over my shoulder, expected me to proceed with my drawing. I said with assumed composure, I thought it was now as perfect as I could make it.—Then set your name to it, said he.—I detested writing a name that was a deception, and therefore did not obey him.—Let me then write it,
said

said he, taking the pencil out of my hand.—I submitted, and he scrawled, scarcely legibly, *Mina Holt*.—My surprise got the better of my petrified confusion, and I exclaimed, Mercy on me! Sir, how entirely your mind must be occupied with Miss Holt, if you can so mistake as to write her name for mine! He again took the pencil, and, without moving from his position, wrote under the drawing,

‘The letters of Maria’s name transpose,
‘You Holt and Hamilton at once dis-
close.’

I was struck motionless. Mrs. Semhurst, not knowing what he had written, and receiving no answer from me to her enquiry, rose, and came to the table. She gratified her curiosity; and, while I sat like Niobe, she underwrote her son’s lines——

Cyril, no longer hide the generous
 flame,
 Own Holt and Hamilton to be the
 same,
 and immediately quitted the room.

Roused to recollection by her leaving
 me, I involuntarily offered to follow her.
 She shut the door too quick for me. Mr.
 Cyril sprang forward, and locked it.

I was really alarmed, and made to-
 wards the bell. He, seeing my fears,
 said, with studied coolness, My dear
 Miss Hamilton needs be under no ap-
 prehensions; she may rest satisfied my
 mother would never leave her in any
 danger. I lock the door only to prevent
 interruption, and, at her first command,
 it shall be opened, if she will patiently
 hear what I have to say.

In the most violent perturbation and
 terror

terror, thinking only how I had been duped by the story of Mina Holt, and how I should escape from my present distress, I dropped into the nearest chair : he seated himself by me, and endeavoured to calm my agitation. Then came the declaration it so much behoved me to have avoided ; and it was concluded by a solemn vow, that made me tremble, that he would not leave the spot he was then in till I told him I must be unhappy with him, or consented to marry him.

Every sentiment that he could have wished infused into my mind, at that moment occupied it. My reason approved him, my passions were all on his side. Convinced that it was, nevertheless, my duty to refuse him, and terrified at the effect such a refusal might produce in a bosom so ardent, I could only answer by tears, and by saying, It is impossible.

He caught at these words. He knew why I thought it impossible; but if I would have five minutes' patience he would prove it not so. What I myself had witnessed, and what Mr. Bellamy had written, must convince me he could not be half so gratified by the utmost accession of wealth or honour as by marrying a woman he was so sincerely and so justifiably attached to: there was therefore no impossibility on his part. His mother, he said, was not only too indulgent to him, but too partial to me to oppose his wishes or to disapprove his choice. 'I informed her,' said he, 'of my first interview with you: she agreed with me that the opinion so respectable a man as captain Dibart evinced he entertained of you, was equally satisfactory with a long personal acquaintance. Of some of Mrs. Dibart's friends she learnt that you had conducted yourself, while with her, in a manner that gained you the esteem of every one: that it was believed misfor-

times early in life had induced you to secrete your family; and that, from the circumstance of your quietly relinquishing a large legacy left you by lady Cadwicke, on account of a mistake in your designation, it was suspected you sunk your family name. You know the attempts I made to get admission to you at lady Jane Alderway's. My endeavours failing, my mother herself took a house for a short time at Richmond, on purpose to make an acquaintance with you. Lady Jane's imprisonment of you barred all my hopes; and I was compelled to seek peace in another country.

‘My mother’s meeting you in Audley Square was purely accident, and she improved it. On my return to England, she promised me every assistance in her power if I would give up living at home, lest I might drive you away, and if I would allow her a reasonable time to form an opinion of your disposition and

temper. To my consent to these unobjectionable requests, I added an assurance that I would abandon my wishes if she found herself disappointed in you; and that I would on no consideration propose myself to you till I had ground to believe you attached to me.

My mother was soon perfectly satisfied, and left me at liberty to act as my love dictated. At that time our beloved and lamented Miranda rose a tremendous obstacle to my views.— You espoused her cause; and that I may not take to myself a merit I did not possess, I here acknowledge it was the hope alone of obtaining your approbation, even at the expence of my passion, that stimulated me to so irksome a duty of humanity. My grief for her was sincere, and for a time I scarcely felt the liberty her death brought me; but you soon resumed your post, and I then only deferred avowing myself till a decent period had elapsed

elapsed, and till I could discover you had such an attachment to me as might secure your happiness in our marriage.

‘To detain you here, my mother contrived, without departing from the truth, to make you believe me engaged to another lady. It was Bellamy who furnished me with the anagram of Hamilton, *Mina Holt*, in case you should ask the name of this supposed lady. His carelessness in directing his letters forwarded my wishes; and your emotion, when my mother unwillingly urged you to the ungrateful task of congratulating this ideal Mina Holt, was every satisfaction I wanted.

‘Ask yourself, therefore, coolly, concluded Mr. Cyril, where there can be any impossibility?—I scorn to tempt you by flating any advantages I possess. It is in my power to support you in affluence: it is in my nature to be kind to you:

you: it is my firm belief I can make you happy: from such an affection as mine you have no cause to fear diminution of regard; but still, if I am deceived in my idea that I have rendered you attached to me, or if you see aught that can endanger your peace in the prospect I offer you, reject me, and I will submit to be miserable.

I heard this recapitulatory explanation without interrupting him: tears of repentance for the folly I had been guilty of in my precipitate unholy marriage, streaming silently from my eyes, while my reason was forced to acknowledge the justice of Heaven in thus punishing me for my profanation of the rite. Who ever felt in greater force than I did at that instant the misery of a divided heart and hand?

Mr. Cyril, waiting my reply, again pro-

pronounced there could be no impediment.

There is, indeed, I answered, one you have no idea of. Would to God I had never concealed it!

You have then deceived me, he returned hastily, or, rather, I have deceived myself. I am sure I was long ago too unguarded to leave you quite in ignorance, and have more than once flattered myself that——

He paused.—I saw the cruelty of torturing him by silence.—I summoned all my courage, and repeated, It is, indeed, Sir, impossible—for—I am married.

He started from the chair he had been sitting on, and stood before me in dead silence: his limbs seemed stiffened

with wonder.—I dared not look up: my sorrow overwhelmed me; and, covering my face with my hand, I sunk under it.

From this posture he tried to move me, that he might judge by my countenance of the truth of what I had asserted. Tell me, tell me, said he eagerly, can this be? Shew me some token, some proof, or I will never believe it. No, no, Miss Hamilton, you hate me, and have invented this excuse to get rid of me.—I will leave you.

I could not suffer him to depart in this error. I begged his patience till I could command my voice, and then that he would hear me with the attention I had paid to him. Repressing the internal commotion that opposed my convincing him, and relying on his honour that he would take no advantage of what

I should confess, I told him in few words, that an imprudent marriage some years before had bound me to a wretch, who, in the hour of distress, had deserted me; and to soften as much as was possible the harsh refusal I was compelled to, I owned the preference my heart gave him.

When he had heard me, without making any farther enquiry, he threw himself into a chair, and remained motionless. Prudence commanded me to leave him, and I obeyed her cruel mandate: he did not oppose me, and I retired to my chamber to indulge my grief and repentance in solitude.

I do not know how long I remained there. A request from Mrs. Semhurst to see me made me go to her. I took no care to dress my looks, supposing her informed of what had passed. Her reception

ception of me made me doubt this immediately. She smiled at my distressed countenance. She told me jestingly I must be responsible for Cyril, for she believed I had sent him to town on some foolish errand.—I stared.—Nay, said she, you know best what he is gone for. I have not seen him: I was dressing when your tête-à-tête ended; but he left word he could not be back to night.—It's no matter, added she, adjusting her handkerchief at the glass, and not observing my emotion, I will not shut the doors against him, even if he comes laden with a ring and a licence, or brings his right reverend uncle with him.

I shook my head, and replied, Oh, my dearest madam, you are then ignorant of what has passed between Mr. Cyril and myself.—Not quite, rejoined good-natured Mrs. Semhurst; I can imagine the scene, I fancy, pretty accurately.

rately. I can see your eyes have paid their due watery tribute on the occasion; but, never mind, they will soon recover if you favour them. I assure you, Mary, he had my good wishes, and you know, I am certain, he had your's, because you told me so; and so, my dear daughter, my charming *Mina Holt*, dry up your eyes, and do not be a silly girl; and then depend on it, you shall have the taffety gown.

The exigency of the case appearing to me to demand instant attention, I begged Mrs. Semhurst no longer to be deceived by her imagination. Mr. Cyril, it was true, had made me the most generous offer; one that I would gladly have accepted, had I been at liberty; but which I had been forced by circumstances to reject. I intreated her instantly to take measures for finding Mr. Cyril, whom I had left almost stupified, and on whom

whom I feared the disappointment might have a serious effect. Still Mrs. Semhurst treated my fears lightly: she supposed I had been playing the tyrant; and now I in my turn deserved some punishment.

I then, in an agony of grief, repentance, and terror, that scorned all disguise, throwing myself on my knees before her, and intreating her forgiveness of a wretch who had, though with an innocent intention, imposed on her goodness, confessed myself the once vain, conceited, insolent Miss Macgilroy, the deceiving and deceived suppositious Countess of Donachmuir, and the deserted wife of Sir Luson Linfield.

Mrs. Semhurst's benevolence exceeded my highest expectations. She tried every method to hush my violent sorrow; and, when I was tolerably calm, listened

tened to the most perfect detail of my misfortunes I could then give her.

She was neither offended at my concealment, nor inclined to censure my imprudences. What she thought laudable in my conduct, she candidly and warmly praised, particularly my religious observance of my marriage vow in my equivocal state : she bid me not doubt Heaven would at one time or other reward me for this piety, and recompense me for my sufferings. She wished I had had earlier confidence in her, or she less delicacy in penetrating into the mystery with which she, soon after her first acquaintance with me, saw I was enveloped. She was extremely shocked at the cause I had for rejecting her son : she, however, was much less alarmed about him than I was, and, in some measure, quieted my fears, by saying she knew his feelings to be very strong, but
his

his reason stronger: he would at first feel the misfortune too deeply to admit of consolation, and must therefore be suffered to indulge his regret; but she assured me I might depend on his victory over himself, and had no reason to doubt my safety. She was grieved for him; she was grieved at being herself balked in her hopes of attaching me to her by affinity. Whatever might have been my conduct in the earlier part of my life, she considered all my follies as consequent on the mode in which I was educated, and incident to an intoxicating situation: she was convinced adversity had schooled me to a happy purpose: it had, perhaps, only removed the clouds that veiled dormant merit. She should never cease to regret the obstacle to her wishes. She was certain Cyril would now never marry: she had wished earnestly to see him settled, because he was formed for domestic happiness; but

it.

it was not to be. She must submit with patience, and should never think my misfortunes, or her son's disappointment, a reason for withdrawing from me that protection which she was more than before aware I now stood in need of. Perhaps, said she, I shall be forced to part with you till he recovers some portion of fortitude; but even then you need only retreat for a time to my daughter, who, you know, has a long while complained of me for keeping you away. At all events, I am certain Cyril will never suffer me to break with you; for his love for you is of that kind that would be consoled by your society.

In this manner did this amiable woman endeavour to comfort me; but still the most dismal apprehensions for Mr. Cyril occupied my mind—apprehensions that I dared not disclose, as they might be founded only in an idea of self-importance.

portance.—I pictured to myself nothing less than suicide; but how could this be hinted to his parent?—I repented my having left him: I repented my having told him I was married: I repented my ever having seen him, and almost cursed my own existence.

Mrs. Semhurst was dejected, but not alarmed. She was persuaded he would go either to his chambers in town for a while, or to Mr. Agthorpe's house, about thirty miles from us. On enquiry of the servants, I was a little pacified by hearing, that though he had gone alone, and in such perturbation as excited their curiosity, he had ordered the chaise towards London. I hoped matters would turn out as his mother predicted; but my fears still haunted me.

Intimate as I had been with almost every species of distress short of guilt, I think

think the horrors of the following night were exceeded by nothing I had suffered. Rest I could not find any where. I was in a fever of dread. I spent the dismal hours in tears and vain condemnations of my early folly ; nor could the return of day afford me the least comfort.

To calm my apprehensions, Mrs. Semhurst indulged me at noon by sending a servant she could depend on to Mr. Cyril's chambers in the Temple. The distance was forty miles : the man returned in the afternoon of the following day with news that Mr. Cyril had been there in the evening after he left us : he had staid there all night ; had set off in a post chaise alone the next morning, and, which afforded us more comfort than any thing, had left to be sent by the post the following letter for his mother :

‘ Dear

Temple, 31st Aug.

Dear madam,

You, by this time, know how all my hopes and wishes have been shipwrecked. Till now I have not been sufficiently master of myself even to think on the subject, nor could any thing induce me to write on it but the fear of alarming you.

After ruminating for a short time on the few words that had destroyed all my bright prospect:—after repeating ten thousand times *it is impossible, for I am married*:—after recalling, in hopes of comfort, the kind, the glowing expressions with which this angel of charity tried to soften her refusal, I found flight my only resource: but even here she is; and here those words are re-choed.

I have discovered that I am not fit to

to be trusted with the guidance of myself. Perhaps I should return. I would return if she had not owned she loved me.——Why should I increase her sufferings?

‘Do, my dear madam, learn of her what her situation is. She said something I could not clearly understand: I collected from it that she had married rashly, and been cruelly used. If so, if there is in the world a wretch so hardened as to have been cruel to such a woman, I beg that every possible means may be tried for her relief.

‘I am now going to Bellamy’s. I am told, at his town house, he is gone directly home: he who knows what I had hoped will best console me under my misfortunes. I shall certainly stay with him five or six weeks; and if I find benefit from his friendship, my next remove

move shall be to my sister's, and from thence, if possible, to you. I would not for the world separate from such protection as your's; but at present I sadly fear I must for ever avoid her.

‘You know me well enough, I trust, to rest satisfied, that, while I retain my senses, I will do nothing that can add to the concern I am certain you feel for me. The least return I can make for your uniform indulgence is the acting in every point as will best shew me

‘Your very dutiful,

‘and affectionate son,

‘HENRY CYRIL.’

After reading this comfortable letter, my fears were hushed, and I sunk into a state of placid melancholy, from which I had

I had not a wish to be relieved. My kind attentive friend strove to give me that cheerfulness which she herself wanted; but my sorrows were not to be disguised or repelled. I abhorred the sight of my own person: I considered myself as a being capable only of evil. I had, by my early indiscretions, laid the foundation of innumerable mischiefs, which every day now seemed perfecting.

END OF VOL. II.

HENRY CYRIL.

After reading this comfortable letter, my tears were pulled, and I sunk into a state of glacid melancholy, from which I had